

# A HISTORY OF HINDU PUBLIC LIFE

## PART I

[Period of the Vedic Saṁhitās, the Brāhmaṇas,  
and the Older Upaniṣads]

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## PREFACE

The political institutions of the Hindu people are not wanting in those characteristics which entitle them to the attention of serious students of history and politics. Their oldest recorded polity (viz. the Vedic) may have had its roots in the original Indo-Iranian (perhaps even Indo-European) stem. Nevertheless when planted in its new environment, it assumed distinctive features separating it from the institutions of other peoples of cognate stock. Its subsequent fortunes are to be traced in the long history of Hindu independence extending with many vicissitudes for more than three thousand years from the date of the oldest R̥gvedic hymns to that of downfall of Maratha and Sikh states in the nineteenth century of the Christian era. During this enormous interval alien dynasties and races established themselves for greater or less periods of time on larger or smaller portions of the Indian subcontinent. But none of these extraneous influences, not even the impact of Islam which found a new home on the Indian soil, succeeded in producing any radical change in the spirit or form of Hindu public life. And yet this remarkable vitality and originality were not purchased at the cost of a rigid uniformity. We may illustrate this point within the limits of the Ancient Period by a few examples. In the Vedic Polity we can distinguish between tribal and territorial States, as also between various kinds of monarchies and overlordships. Later times witnessed the rise of centralised kingdoms and empires, of republics of unitary and federal types, of clan-monarchies and so forth. Dim and indistinct, again, as is the historical outline, certain periods stand out with sufficient clearness as landmarks illustrating special phases of Hindu public life at their highest pitch of development. Among these may be mentioned the Maurya age and the age of the *Arthaśāstra* with an administrative organization almost ruthlessly modern in its thoroughness and efficiency, the period of the early Buddhist literature with republics following an almost modern procedure and the period of the Imperial Cholas with village assemblies enjoying substantial rights of local self-government.

It therefore seems desirable to reconstruct, as far as possible, the history of Hindu political institutions during their long and eventful career. But the difficulties in the way of such reconstruction are

various and important. To confine ourselves, again, to the limits of the Ancient Period, we may trace them chiefly to the imperfections of our original sources. The only systematic accounts that have come down to us are found in the *Arthasāstra* and *Nitiśāstra* treatises as well as in the sections on Law and Polity in the *Smṛtis*, *Epics* and *Purāṇas*. It can hardly be doubted that the basis of these descriptions has ultimately to be sought in the experience of actual State forms. But it appears not less certain that the spirit and probably also some of the forms of the institutions described in these works bore the impress of the characteristic ideas of their authors—the teachers of the science of polity in the one case and those of the Sacred Law in the other. Other principal sources of our knowledge of Ancient Indian polity consist of scattered data to be found in the Vedic Literature, the literature of Buddhism and Jainism, the classical Sanskrit literature, the inscriptions and the foreign notices. But the Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* besides abounding in obscurities of various kinds, reflect for the most part the priestly standpoint. In the field of Buddhist literature we have in the *Jātakas* objective pictures of social life. But these are liable to all the drawbacks of folklore, besides being touched up by the characteristic rules of Buddhist morality. Within the range of classical Sanskrit literature the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa alone offers a mass of authentic data bearing on the structure and functions of the administrative machinery in a small isolated State for more than three centuries. The picture of Hindu polity presented in most other texts is fragmentary and sporadic, if not one-sided in its character. The inscriptions no doubt form a solid basis for the reconstruction of Hindu public life prevailing at definite places and times. Not only, however, is their antiquity relatively late and their distribution very unequal, but their data are very scrappy while the technical terms with which they are replete are full of obscurities which no amount of future research can be expected to clear up completely. The Greek, Chinese and Arab notices of Ancient Indian institutions are of great value as far as they go. But they are relatively very scanty and often present characteristic difficulties of interpretation. In the comparative dearth of positive facts some help can be derived from parallel institutions of other Ancient (specially Indo-European) peoples. But the example of the Anglo-Saxon constitution is enough to show that extreme caution is needed in applying the argument from analogy. Besides the evidence of historical parallels, that of ancient institutions surviving down to later times may be utilised for

the investigation of Ancient Indian polity. But the scope of such application is necessarily of a limited character.

The present work forms the first part of a projected critical and comprehensive history of Hindu public life commencing from the earliest times and terminating in the first instance with the Gupta period. Dealing as it does with the material of the Vedic literature, it covers much of the ground that has already been trodden by eminent interpreters of original texts as well as authors of systematic treatises of Hindu polity. Nevertheless it has seemed desirable to the author to study the subject afresh by completing the available data, by seeking their correct interpretation in the light of their context and other evidence, by considering various current views, by suggesting new solutions of old problems and by starting new lines of enquiry.

While the scope of the present volume is limited to the period of the Vedic *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the older *Upaniṣads*, the *Śrautasūtras* and other works belonging to the later Vedic times have been freely utilized for supplementing the older data. Again, while it is recognised that the chronological strata represented by the *Rg-veda*, the *Atharvaveda* and *Brāhmaṇas* overlap one another to a certain extent, their subject-matter has been treated in three successive chapters for the purpose of describing broadly the order of development of institutions belonging to associated branches of literature. It has thus been possible to trace a sequence, not necessarily and uniformly chronological, in the growth of institutions like kingship, public administration, Popular Assemblies, the relations between the spiritual and temporal powers as well as the civil and religious status of classes. In the fourth and concluding chapter an attempt has been made to sum up and evaluate the characteristics of Hindu public life in the light of the preceding survey.

On a number of fundamental questions like those relating to the position of the Vedic King and the functions of the Vedic Popular Assemblies, the author has been constrained for lack of adequate data to express himself with extreme caution. Thus he has been unable to endorse such confident verdicts as that the king in late Vedic times was "a constitutional monarch exercising authority according to the law" and that the Vedic *Samiti* was "a sovereign body from the constitutional point of view". On the other hand he has felt himself justified in emphasizing the various limitations imposed upon kingship according to the current ideas of the time, by morality and custom and by the organization of the Society and the State, not to speak of

the undefined influence exercised down to the latest times by the *vox populi*. Again it has been shown how in the complete absence of any claim to divine descent and exercise of priestly functions, the kingship could not but become essentially a magistracy charged, with greater distinctness in later times, with the execution of executive, judicial and military functions.

The author's opinions on many points of detail and general interpretation have differed from those of acknowledged authorities on the subject. This has been the case, for example, with the question of significance of phrases like *susabhya*, *sabheyo yuvā* and *grāmakāma* as well as the reference to the wrong done by a royal pair in the *sabhā* in various *Yajus Samhitā* texts and the theory of a general transformation in the status of the *Vaiśya* and the *Sūdra* in late Vedic times. It is to be hoped that the author's suggestions may help to bring the difficult problems somewhat nearer solution than before. On other points such as the constitution and functions of Vedic Assemblies as well as the duties of the *sūta*, *sthapati* and other officers, the author has been content to offer only tentative conclusions or even leave them in their existing state of obscurity. In so far as the status of classes (and especially of the *Brāhmaṇas*) in the late Vedic State is concerned, he has attempted to present as balanced and complete an account as the existing materials will allow.

It now remains for the author to acknowledge the assistance he has received in the preparation of the present work. His foremost acknowledgments are due to Lt. Col. the Hon'ble Dr. R.B.Pal, M.A., D.L., Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, without whose scholarly interest and encouragement the book would have been indefinitely delayed in its publication. To his friend and colleague Pandit K.C. Chatterjee M.A., of the Calcutta University, he is thankful for occasional help in the translation of difficult texts. He has also to thank the Directors and staff of the Calcutta Oriental Press, Ltd., for uniform courtesy under various trying circumstances. To his son Mr. R. K. Ghoshal, M.A., he is indebted for preparation of the Index.

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# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

### THE RĠVEDIC STATE

*Introductory.* Critical estimate of materials for study of Ancient Vedic State, 1, 2.

*Social Organisation in the Rġveda.* Āryās distinguished from Dāsas, 2; influence of the blood-tie, 3, 4; of kinship groups, 4, 5, 6; of social divisions, 6, 7; of popular occupations, 7, 8.

✓ *Origin of Vedic Kingship.* Antiquity, 8; theories of origin, 8, 9; true origin, 9.

✓ *Attributes of Rġvedic Kingship.* Tribal monarchy in RV, 9; its high dignity and prosperity, 9, 10, 11; *rājya*, *rāṣṭra* and *kṣatra* as tokens of king's authority, 11, 12; no claim to divine descent, 12.

*The King's Functions.* Executive and judicial, 12, 13; military, 13; anticipations of later guardianship of Sacred Law, 13, 14.

*Limitations of Rġvedic Kingship.* Conception of omnipotent Divine Law and all-powerful custom, 14; Vedic equivalent of folk-right, 14; separation of ruling and priestly functions, 14; influence of *sabhā* and *samiti*, 15.

*Summary*, 15, 16.

*Constitutional Types.* Zimmer's three types, 16, 17; criticism, 17, 18.

*The King's Administration.* The beginnings of judicial administration, ✓ 18; of financial administration, 18, 19; of military administration, 19, 20; office of the *grāmaṇi*, 20; of the *kṣattr*, 21.

*The King's Retainers and Dependants.* *Ibhas* and *ibhyas*, 21; *upastis* and *stis*, 21.

*The Order of Princes and Nobles.* Status of *rājaputras*, 21, 22; distinctive privilege of nobles, 22; distinction mainly personal, 22.

*The Position of the Priestly Class in the Rġvedic State.* Brāhmaṇa's Divine Right to social precedence, 23; Brāhmaṇa's civil status, 23; comparison of Vedic priestly families with Graeco-Roman priestly classes, 23, 24.

*The Purohita.* References in history and legend, 24; king's necessity for *purohita*, 24; *purohita*'s functions, 25.

✓ *The Popular Assemblies.* Imperfection of picture, 25; antiquity of *sabhā* and *samiti*, 25, 26; constitution and functions of *sabhā*, 26; of *samiti*, 27; *saṃgati*, 27; *vidatha*, 28; analogy of Anglo-Saxon Councils, 28, 29.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STATE IN THE ATHARVAVEDA

*Introductory.* Comparison of *Atharvavedic* political institutions with *Rgvedic*, 30; tribes and peoples in *AV.* compared with those in *RV.*, 30; social divisions in *AV.* compared with those in *RV.*, 30, 31.

*Kingship in the Atharvaveda.* Historical references, 31; dignity and authority of kingship, 31, 32; its divine sanctity, 33; no claim to divine descent, 34.

*Rāṣṭra, Rājya and Kṣatra.* Literal and metaphorical applications, 34; relation to attributes of kingship, 34, 35, 36.

*Relations between Brahma and Kṣatra.* The two dominant powers, 36; their quasi-sanctity, 36; their essential difference, 36.

*Summary*, 36, 37.

*The King's Administration.* *Atharvavedic* administration compared with *Rgvedic*, 37; the administration of justice, 37; of finance, 37, 38, 39; military administration, 39; office of the *grāmaṇī*, 39; status of *sūtas* and *grāmaṇīs*, 40; office of the *sūta*, 40; of the *sthapati*, 40, 41; of the *kṣattr* and the *pariveśṭr*, 41; characteristics of good administration, 41, 42.

*The King's Clients.* Composition of *upastis*, 42.

*The Status of Classes.* Legend of Creation in *AB.*, 43; status of the *Śūdra*, 43; of the *Vaiśya* and the *Rājanya*, 43, 44; of the *Brāhmaṇas*, 44, 45.

*The Popular Assemblies.* Composition of *sabhā* and *samiti*, 45, 46; functions of *samiti*, 46, 47. its general significance, 47, 48; distinction between *sabhya* and *sabhāsad*, 48; composition and functions of *sabhā*, 48, 49; *vidatha*, 49.

## CHAPTER III

### THE STATE IN THE YAJUS SAMHITĀS, THE BRĀHMAṆAS AND THE OLDER UPANIṢADS

*Introductory.* Climax of the Vedic State, 50; rise of new States and combinations of old States, 50, 51; new light upon status of *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*, 51, 52, 53.

*Kingship in the Yajus Samhitās and the Brāhmaṇas.* Rise of territorial kingship, 53, 54; of over-lordships, 54.

*Attributes of Kingship.* Its high prosperity, 54, 55; dignity, 55, 56; authority, 56; its moral pre-eminence, 56, 57; suggestions of quasi-divinity and rule by Divine Right, 57, 58, 59; no divine descent, 60; question of king's ownership of soil, 60, 61, 62.

*The King's Functions.* Executive, 62; judicial, 63, 64; guardianship of *dharma* and *Brāhmaṇas*, 64; king's supreme command in war, 64, 65, 66.

*Rājya, Rāṣṭra and Kṣatra.* Their significance, 66; equation of *kṣatra* and *rāṣṭra* with king, 67; of *kṣatra* with *rājanya*, 67.

*Kṣatra and Viś.* Comparison of attributes, 68; political subjection of *viś* to *kṣatra*, 68, 69, 70, 71; *viś* as source of *kṣatra*, 71.

*Brahma, Kṣatra and Viś.* Joint sovereignty of *brahma* and *kṣatra* over *viś*, 72; subjection of *kṣatra* and *viś* to *brahma*, 72, 73; dependence of *kṣatra* upon *brahma* and of *viś* upon *kṣatra*, 73.

*Brahma and Kṣatra.* The two dominant powers, 73; different attributes and functions, 74; mutual incompatibility and antagonism, 75, 76; domination of *kṣatra* by *brahma*, 76, 77, 78; their harmony and interdependence, 78; superiority of *kṣatra* to *brahma*, 79; mutual relations of *kṣatra* and *brahma* in the ritual, 79, 80.

*Types of Kingship.* Examples of hereditary monarchy, 80; of elective monarchy, 80; of dynastic government, 81, 82; royal succession by primogeniture, 82.

*Royal and Imperial Titles.* Use of *adhirāja*, *adhipati*, *virāt*, *saṃrāt* and *svarāt* in *RV.* and *AV.*, 82, 83; their association in *Yajus Saṃhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas* with different royal sacrifices, 83, 84; with different regions, 85; interpretation of *vairājya*, 86, 87.

*The Position of the Emperor.* Application of multiple titles and epithets to the Emperor, 87, 88, 89, 90; of various forms of universal authority to the same, 90; character of Vedic Empires, 91.

*Limitations of Later Vedic Kingship.* Insecurity of kingship, 91, 92; instability of relation between king and subjects, 92, 93; influence of divine law and ancient custom, 93; sovereignty of sacred law, 94; principles of constitutional restraint, 94, 95; constitutional influence of *Brāhmaṇas* and *purohitas*, 95; of *vox populi*, 95, 96.

*Summary*, 96, 97, 98.

*The Royal Family.* Constitutional status of the Chief Queen and other Queens, 98, 99; of king's son and brother, 99, 100.

*The King's Administration.* The king's Court and Privy Council, 100; finance, 100; officers participating in kingly sacrifices, 101, 102; association of *senānis* and *grāmaṇīs* with military command, 103; status

of *senāni*, 103, 104; Vedic State not a *Krieg-Staat*, 104; *senāni*'s subordinates, 104; army organisation on military lines, 104; status of *sūtas* and *grāmaṇīs*, 104, 105; functions of *sūta*, 105, 106; of *grāmaṇī*, 106, 107; nature of *grāmaṇī*'s office, 107; office of *grāmya-vādin*, 108; of *sthapati*, 108, 109; of *kṣattr*, 109; of *sarigrahitr*, 109, 110; of *bhāgadugha*, 110; of *aṅśāvāpa*, 110; of *pālāgala* (or *pālākala*), 110, 111; of *saciva*, 111; of *mantrin*, 111; significance of references to individual officials at *Rājasūya*, 111, 112; status of owners of *grāmas* by performance of special sacrifices, 112, 113, 114, 115; of owners of seven *grāmas* by same process, 115; references in Older *Upaniṣads* to king's executive officers, 116; to village administration, 116; to test of good administration, 116; to insecurity of king's office, 116.

*Summary*, 117.

*Councils and Assemblies.* Changes in *saṁiti* in *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* times and in time of Older *Upaniṣads*, 118, 119; changed constitution of *sabhā*, 119, 120, 121; its changed functions, 121, 122; influence of *vox populi*, 123, 124; later references to rites for success in *pariṣad*, 124, 125.

✓ *The Question of Representation of Classes.* References to individual *rājanya*, *taṅṣan* and *rathakāra* in Black *Yajus* texts, 125; to representatives of social classes at *Rājasūya* ceremonies, 125, 126.

*Status of Classes and Other Social Groups—*

✓ *A. General.* Account of religious status of classes contrasted with that of their civil status, 127.

*B. ✓ The Śūdra's Status.* The *Śūdra* in the legends of cosmic creation, 128; his place in social system, 128, 129; his religious disabilities, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133; his civil disabilities, 133; reaction in his favour, 133, 134; status of *taṅṣan* and *rathakāra*, 134, 135; of *kārimāgadha*, 135.

*C. ✓ The Status of the Vaiśya.* His social status, 135; his religious status, 136; his civil status 137, 138.

*D. The Status of the Kṣatriya.* His religious rights and disabilities, 138, 139, 140; his civil status, 140; *rājaputras* and *rājanyas* 141, 142, 143; the king's retainers 143, 144.

✓ *E. The Status of the Brāhmaṇa.* Extreme view of *Brāhmaṇa*'s monopoly of sacrifice, 144; doctrine of *Brāhmaṇa*'s divinity and its corollary, 145; dictum of *Brāhmaṇa*'s independence and its corollary, 145, 146; of *brahma*'s being birth-place of *kṣatra* and its conclusion, 146, 147; summary of *Brāhmaṇa*'s private rights, 147, 148; his public rights, 148, 149; limitations of these rights, 149, 150.



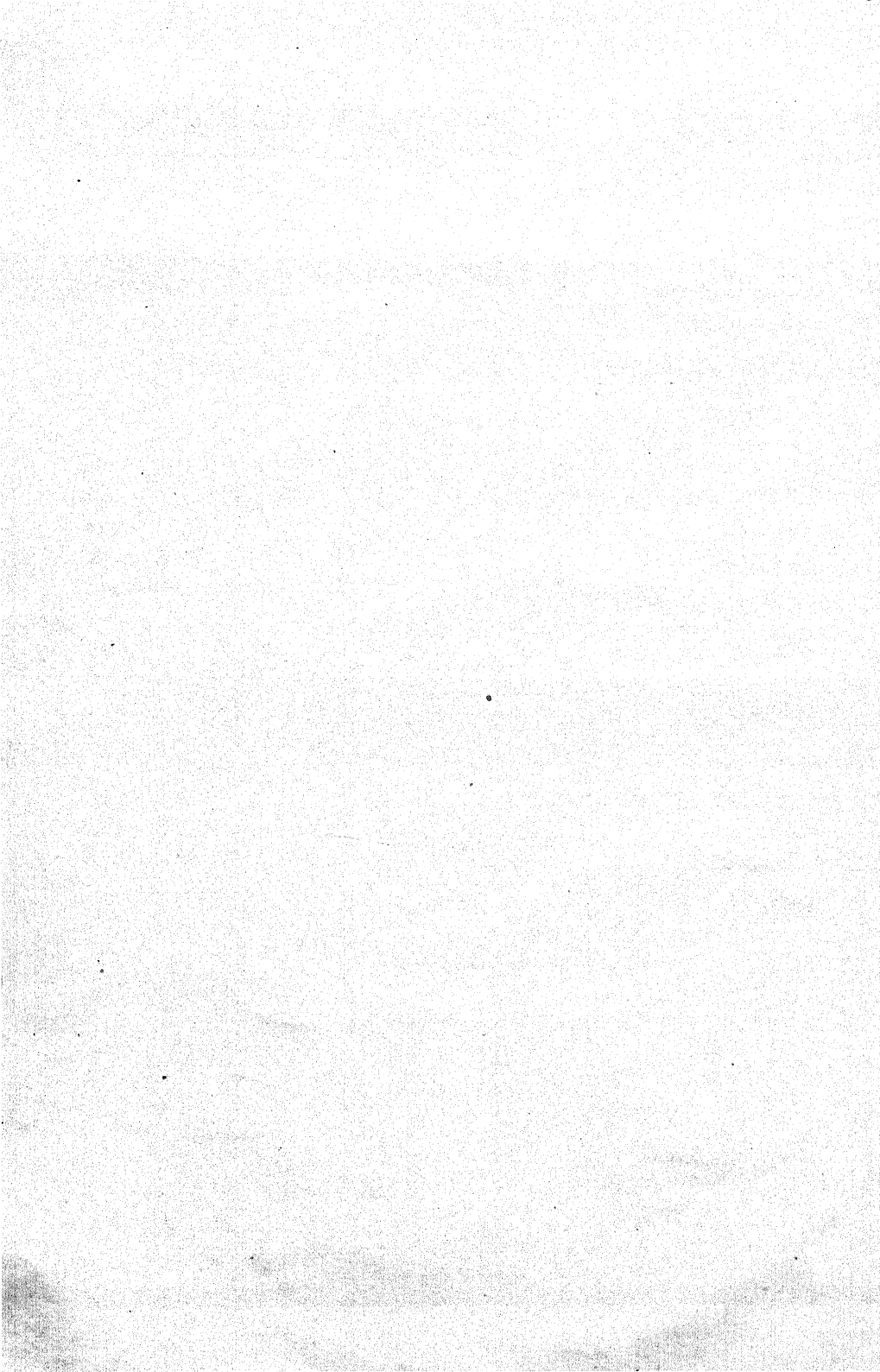
F. *The Position of the Purohita*. Increased importance of purohita's functions, 151, 152; his necessity for king and kingdom, 152, 153; his place at the *Rājasūya*, 153; purohita stories 153, 154, 155, 156; the *adhvaryu* as king, 156, 157.

G. *General Remarks*. Alleged change in status of *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*, 157, 158; criticism, 159; limited character of *Brāhmaṇa*'s rights, 159; its causes.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Early tribal kings and assemblies, 161; rise of territorial State and over-lordships, 161; monarchy the standard type, 162; its varieties, 162; attributes of Vedic kingship, 162; references to king's rule by quasi-divinity and Divine Right, 163; but no claim to divine descent, 163; king's functions, 163; kingship not a centralised despotism, 163; separation of *brahma* from *kṣatra*, 163, 164; their mutual relations, 164; comparison with mediaeval European polity, 164; purohita's relation to king, 164; constitutional influence of *Brāhmaṇas* and purohita, 164; beginnings of State administration in *RV.*, 164; rise of centralised government, 165; King's Court and Privy Council, 165; various officials, 165, 166; test of good administration, 166; constitution and functions of *sabhā* and *saṃiti*, 166; their later history, 166, 167; Anglo-Saxon analogy, 167; influence of *vox populi*, 167; division of society into four classes, 167; civil and religious status of *śūdra*, *vaiśya*, *kṣatriya* and *brāhmaṇa*, 167, 168; racial, economic and geographical factors of the growth of Hindu Public Life, 169, 170; general review, 169; weakness of Vedic polity, 170; Oldenberg on Vedic public life, 170; criticism, 170; legacy of Vedic State, 170, 171.



## ABBREVIATIONS

RV.	=	R̥gveda-Saṃhitā
SV.	=	Sāmaveda-Saṃhitā
AV.	=	Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā
TS.	=	Taittirīya-Saṃhitā
VS.	=	Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā
KS.	=	Kāthaka-Saṃhitā
MS.	=	Maitrāyaṇī-Saṃhitā
KapS.	=	Kapiṣṭhala-Kātha-Saṃhitā
AB.	=	Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa
KB.	=	Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa
PB.	=	Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa
SB.	=	Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa
TB.	=	Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa
JB.	=	Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa
JUB.	=	Jaiminiya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa
TA.	=	Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka
BU.	=	Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad
CU.	=	Chāndogya-Upaniṣad
PU.	=	Praśna-Upaniṣad
ASS.	=	Āśvalāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra
SSS.	=	Śāṅkhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra
ĀpSS.	=	Āpastamba-Śrauta-Sūtra
BSS.	=	Baudhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra
KSS.	=	Kātyāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra
LSS.	=	Lātyāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra
VSS.	=	Vārāha-Śrauta-Sūtra
BGS.	=	Baudhāyana-Gṛhya-Sūtra
PGS.	=	Pāraskara-Gṛhya-Sūtra
HOS.	=	Harvard Oriental Series
SBE.	=	Sacred Books of the East Series
VI.	=	Vedic Index of Names and Subjects. Vols. I & II. By A. A. Macdonell and A. B. Keith.

In the present work the translations from AV., TS., VS., AB., (with KB.), SB., PB., JB., BU., CU. and KSS. follow unless otherwise stated, the respective versions of Whitney and Lanman (HOS. Vols. VII—VIII), Keith (HOS. Vols. XVIII—XIX), Griffith (*The White Yajurveda*. Tr. with commentary

by Ralph T. H. Griffith, Benares, 1899), Keith (*HOS.* Vol. XXV), Eggeling (*SBE.* Vols. XII, XXVI, XLI, XLIV), Caland (*Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa. The Brāhmaṇa of twenty-five chapters.* Bib. Ind. ed.), Caland (*Das Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl.* text, übersetzung, indices), Max Müller (*SBE.* Vol. XV), Max Müller (*SBE.* Vol. I), and Caland (*Das Śrautasūtra des Āpastamba*, aus dem Sanskrit übersetzt von Dr. W. Caland, Gottingen and Leipzig, 1921).

## CHAPTER I

### THE ṚGVEDIC STATE

#### *Introductory*

The data for reconstruction of the early political institutions of the Indo-Aryans are to be found in the Vedic Literature consisting principally of the *Samhitās*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Upaniṣads*, and *Kalpasūtras*. Because of the preponderantly religious character of these works, their references to public administration are necessarily of an indirect character. What is more, the terms and expressions found in these compositions are frequently marked by obscurities and ambiguities of a pronounced type.<sup>1</sup> Again, owing to the loss of continuous tradition, the significance of the Vedic expressions was frequently lost to the Indian commentators of the mediaeval times who differ in their interpretations not only from each other but even among themselves. In the face of these difficulties it is no wonder that the problems raised by the references to public life in the Vedic texts still continue to defy solution after years of intensive research. In the dearth of definite data the attempt has often been made to throw light upon the obscurities of the Vedic State by analogies drawn from institutions of other Indo-European peoples. The example of the Anglo-Saxon

<sup>1</sup> We may quote here the striking remarks of Bloomfield introducing his paper on the *Meaning and Etymology of the Vedic word Vidatha* (JAOS., vol. 19, p. 12: —“The interpretation of words that are restricted in their occurrence to the poetic parts of the Veda is often a delicate task, even when the word is a very common one. ... The hieratic mysticism of the diction tends to inflate many words with esoteric shades of meaning which becloud their original value; in sober surroundings the same word would presumably betray its meaning almost of itself. The scene of the Vedic *ṛṣi's* imaginings is both earth and heaven, the persons both men and gods: frequently an inextricable blend of the two pairs, divine men on earth and very earthly gods in heaven obfuscate the situation still further.”

constitution, however, reminds us, as we shall see in the sequel, how the conclusions drawn by scholars one or two generations before, have been modified by the progress of subsequent research.

We have stated above that the literature of the Vedic *Samhitās* and *Brāhmanas* which is the primary source of our enquiries is almost exclusively of a religious character. Indeed we have in this case no works of general literature like the *Iliad* or the *Beowulf* reflecting the actual conditions of contemporary society. Still more do we suffer from the complete absence of positive data comparable to the valuable Prefaces of Anglo-Saxon Charters and the lists of fines and compensations mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Laws. Of such important evidence as that derived from recent excavations of ancient tombs in Germany, there is in India as yet hardly any trace. In these circumstances it is impossible for us to estimate how far the picture, dim as it is in its outline and obscure in its details, drawn by the priestly authors reflect the actual characteristics of the Ancient Vedic State, uncoloured by their characteristic prejudices or conception of class interests.

### *Social organization in the R̥gveda*

The *R̥gveda Samhitā* which is the oldest literary monument of the Indians shows a number of tribes or peoples collectively called *Āryas* to be in occupation of the tract of country stretching from the North-Eastern highlands of the Iranian plateau across the land of the Five Rivers to the upper course of the Ganges. They were distinguished from the native inhabitants (called *Dasyus* or *Dāsas*) by ethnic as well as cultural differences, and many are the references in the *R̥V.* hymns to the wars won, as the seers fondly believed through the favour of the gods, by the *Āryas* against the *Dasyus*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Among the epithets applied in the *R̥gveda* to the *Dasyus* or *Dāsas* are



Within the Aryan society the tie of kinship played an important, though not a preponderant, part. In one important respect, it is true, Indo-Aryan society was marked by complete absence of the blood-tie. It has been satisfactorily proved that from the beginning of recorded history the holding or ownership of land by village communities (or joint families) was as much unknown to the Vedic Aryans as to the ancient Teutonic peoples.<sup>3</sup> In another respect the absence of the blood-tie seems to have been the distinctive characteristic of the Vedic Aryans. Of any institution like the public sacrifices so well known to the Greeks and Romans, there is in the *R̥V.* and later Vedic works hardly any trace. The centre of the Vedic cult is almost exclusively the individual sacrificer (*yajamāna* or *yajñapati*) maintaining his single or threefold sacred fire. Even in the case of rites relating to the public life, the sacrifice is intended not for the folk as such, but primarily for the individual king. To this general rule there is only one important exception in the case of the *sattras* (sacrificial sessions) performed by the whole body of officiating priests. Here we are told that while the evil done belongs to him who did it, the whole merit of the performance belongs collectively to the priests. It is, however, doubtful whether the *sattra* is the survival of an older cult of public sacrifice or else a priestly invention of later times.<sup>4</sup>

*anāsa, akarman, adevayuh, abrahman, ayajvan, avrata* and *anyavrata*. For references see VI. *Ārya, Dasyu* and *Dāsa*.

3 See VI. *s.v. urvarā* and *ksetra* for the Vedic evidence. For the case of the Ancient Teutonic peoples cf. Joliffe, *The Constitutional History of Mediaeval England*, p. 4:—"One form of the predominance of the blood-tie was lacking with the English and indeed with all Teutonic peoples. By the period of their appearance in history, they had abandoned the joint-family holding of land, which seems to have been common to all the primitive peoples of the North and which survived in Wales into the Middle Ages."

4 On the whole subject see specially Oldenberg, *Das Religion des Veda*, pp. 370-77. In *Vedische Mythologie*, vol. II, pp. 121-26 Hillebrandt has a section

In other respects R̥gvedic Society bears evident traces of the influence of kinship. Let us begin with the oldest fragments of the Indian customary law such as are found in the Vedas *RV.* V. 61. 8 declares a man's distinction from a woman to be his wergeld (*Vairadeya*). This introduces us to a principle well-known to the Anglo-Saxon constitution, namely that of joint responsibility of kinsmen before the law. In another passage (*RV.* II. 32. 4) the poet prays to the Goddess of the full Moon (*Rākā*) for gift of a hero-son with 100 cows as wergeld (*śatadāya*). This is identical with the rate which is prescribed for Vaiśyas centuries later in *B.D.S.*, I. 10. 19, 2 and *Āp.DS.*, I. 9. 24. 2-4. It deserves, however, to be mentioned that we have in the Vedas no trace of an institution resembling the recognition of kinsmen as guarantors ('borh') in Anglo-Saxon constitutional history.

More important than the above is the fact that the Vedic Aryans appear from the first to be grouped into families, clans and tribes resembling at least in part similar divisions in the Graeco-Roman as well as the Ancient Teutonic Society. The extreme view on this point is held by Zimmer who concludes from a number of selected texts that the R̥gvedic State consists of a series of ascending divisions based on kinship, viz. the single family, the joint family or clan or village community (*grāma*, or *vrjana*), the clan in the wider sense (*viś*) and the tribe or people (*jana*). For these divisions Zimmer finds parallels in the old Iranian, old German, old Slavonic and old Italian societies. From the evidence of other passages Zimmer concludes that a corresponding arrangement existed in the

with the caption *Sacra Publica*, in which he collects all references in the R̥gveda to the institution of public fires and in particular to that of the fire of the *sabhā*. But the list is a meagre one. Commenting on this remarkable silence of Vedic texts about the sacrifices of the tribe Keith observes (*Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p. 290), "The Vedic attitude to the clan is unnatural and is a sign of developed ritual, not of primitive relations."



field of military organization, the tribal host being organised successively according to the *viś* ('clan'), the *vrāja* or *vrā* ('the village-host') and the fighting members of the *kula* (family).<sup>4a</sup>

Zimmer's view of the clear-cut social organization of the R̥gvedic Aryans has been severely criticized on the basis of a completely different interpretation of the passages concerned.<sup>5</sup> In fact out of the R̥gvedic texts quoted by Zimmer, only three (II. 26. 3, X. 84. 4, X. 91. 2) have been held to support his interpretation of *viś* as a division of a tribe. Similarly it has been pointed out that while one

4a Cf. Zimmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-162: "Die höchste politische Einheit der Vedischen Arier ist der Stamm: er ist eine Vereinigung mehrerer Gaue. Fragen wir nach einer einheimischen Bezeichnung dieses Staatsganzen, so müssen wir *jana* solche ansehen.....

"Die Nächste Unterabtheilung des Stammes ist der Gau: sein einheimischer Name ist *viç*.....

"In der weiteren Abstufung kommt die Dorfschaft *grāma*, *vrjana*, vollständig gleich dem altgermanischen *vicus*. Die Dorfgemeinde selbst beruht wieder auf der Vereinigung der einzelnen Familien.

"Wir sehen also, dass der altindische Staat sich ganz entsprechend dem alternischen, altgermanischen, altslavischen und altitalischen aufbaut.....

"Es ordnete sich demnach die Kriegsmacht eines Stammes zuerst nach *Viç*, dann nach *Vrāja* oder *Vrā*, welche letzteren wie der aus den kampffähigen Gliedern des *Kula* zusammengesetzt waren."

5 Illustrative of these differences is the fact that *Vrā* (I. 126. 5) is taken by Zimmer p. 162 to refer to the village host composed of kinsmen and forming a part of the *Viś*, ('eine Abtheilung der *Viç*, deren Glieder unter einander nahe Verwandt (*subandhu*) waren, was auf die Kriegerschaar des Dorfes passt'). On the other hand Pischel (*Vedische Studien*, 2. 121, 313 ff.) applies to it in all cases the general sense of 'female.' Again, while Zimmer, p. 162 takes *śardham śardham*, *vrātam vrātam*, *gaṇam gaṇam* of V. 53. 11 to refer to troops of Maruts arranged according to separate groups, companies and platoons ('nach Einzelnen Schaaeren, Haufen, Rotten'), the authors of the *Vedic Index* find in it no indication of a distinct series of divisions. Similarly while Zimmer, p. 171 takes *RV. X. 179. 2 = AV. VII. 12. 2*, using the simile of *Kulapas* attending the *Vrājapati*, to refer to the heads of families attending the leader of the village host. Whitney (*AV. tr.* p. 436) understands it to mean a chieftain surrounded by his leading men. Again while *Vrjana* is identified by Zimmer, (pp. 142, 161) with the secure abode where the clan lives and corresponding generally to the village or village host (*grāma*), Geldner (*op. cit.*, pp. 139-154) derives all his interpretations from the literal sense of 'net.'

passage (X. 84. 4) supports Zimmer's explanation of *viś* as a fighting unit, other passages quoted by him (V. 53. 11. etc.) are too vague for his theory. It is moreover uncertain whether *viś* means a local division (canton) or a unit of relationship (clan), and the same ambiguity belongs to the term *grāma*. Indeed while the texts support to some extent the division of *jana* into *viśas*, they do not justify the further division of *viśas* into *grāmas*.<sup>6</sup>

In spite of the above differences of opinion, it seems to be generally agreed that the *kula* (of which we have the derivative *kulapā* meaning 'head of the family'), the *viś* (in the special sense) and the *jana* of the Vedic Samhitās, stand respectively for the family, the clan in the wider sense (or perhaps the canton) and the tribe (or people). Again, a particular passage (X. 84. 4) has been held to point to the *viś* as the fighting unit similar to the fighting groups of kinsmen in Ancient Germany and Homeric Greece. According to the same view the real elements of the Vedic State were the *gotra* and the *jana* corresponding to the Roman *gens* and *tribus*, and the Greek *genos* and *phylae* respectively.

✓ Alongside this dimly traceable division into kinship groups we can detect from early Rgvedic times the emergence of another classification which was destined to become the cornerstone of all later Indian social organization. This was the classification of the people into grades which gradually hardened into the well-known system of the four *varṇas* (castes). Already in RV. VIII. 35. 16-18 we have in connection with a poet's prayer for strengthening the factors concerned, the several groups *Brahman* and thought, *Kṣatra* and men of war and lastly

6 For the above views see VI. s.v. *grāma*, *viś*, and especially *jana* giving full references. In justice to Zimmer, it may be mentioned that he claims no fixed terminology for the Vedic *jana*, *viś* and *grāma* (*urjana*) (*op. cit.* p. 160 n).

7 For references see VI. especially s.v. *jana*.

*Viś* and cattle.<sup>7a</sup> In I. 113. 6 a goddess is said to have awakened all to regard their different vocations, one to high sway, one to exalted glory, one to pursue his gain and one his labour.<sup>7b</sup> In this it is easy to detect an unmistakable reference to the characteristic occupations of the four *varṇas* of later times. By the latest *R̥gvedic* period we are introduced to the famous theory of the *Puruṣasūkta* (X. 90) declaring the four castes\* (here for the first time called Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya, Vaiśya and Śūdra) to have arisen from the different limbs of the Primeval Man sacrificed by the gods. So completely was this account recognised in later times as embodying the standard theory of creation of the four castes that it was reproduced in the later *Samhitās* with slight variations. What is more, it was adopted as the pattern on which were woven other theories bringing its underlying ideas into distinctness.<sup>8</sup>

✓ The occupations of the Vedic Indians were not without their influence upon the political institutions of the people. Essentially a people living in villages, they made their living by agricultural and pastoral pursuits as well as simple rural industries. Under such circumstances it was but natural that the cow should be re-

7a *brahma jinvatamuta jinvatam dhiyah...kṣatram jinvatamuta jinvatam nṛn... dhenur-jinvatamuta jinvatam viśo...*

7b *kṣatrāya tvam śravase tvam mahiyā  
iṣṭaye tvamarthamiva tvamityai*

8 The problem of the existence of caste in the *R̥gveda* has formed the subject of keen controversy among scholars for a long time. Haug (*Brahma und die Brahmanen*, 1871), Kern (*Indische Theorien über die Standenvertheilung*, 1871) and Ludwig (*RV. tr. III. 237-243*) contended that the *RV.* already pointed to the system of castes. This view was strongly opposed by Muir (*Old Sanskrit Texts*, vol. I. pp. 239 ff.) and Zimmer (*op. cit.*, pp. 185-203). On the other hand Oldenberg (*Das Religion des Veda*, pp. 373 ff.) and Geldner (*Vedische Studien*, 2, 146 n. 1.) have stated that the caste system was for all practical purposes established in *RV.* times. More recently the authors of the VI. (s.v. *varṇa*) after considering *seriatim* the arguments of Muir and Zimmer conclude that the caste system was already on its way to general acceptance in *R̥gvedic* times.

garded as the pecuniary unit not only for commercial transactions, but also for public affairs. An *AV.* passage to be quoted later lists the oldest known sources of the royal revenue as consisting of the king's share of the village (i.e. the agricultural produce) as well as live-stock, and these primitive heads were remembered among the items of revenue far down into the period of the *Smṛtis*. Even the wergeld for a freeman, as we have seen, was fixed in these times according to the primitive unit of cattle.

### *Origin of Vedic Kingship*

From the beginning of recorded history kingship in an established institution in Indian society. Among kings mentioned in *Maṇḍalas* II-VII belonging to the older strata of the *Ṛgveda* are Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna, Sṛñjaya Daivarāta, Sāhadevyā Somaka, Tūrvayāṇa, Purukutsa and his son Trasadasyu of the Pūru line, and last but not the least, Divodāsa and his son Sudās of the Bharata stock.<sup>9</sup> The Vedic people themselves, when reflecting at a later date on the origin of kingship, could think of its divine prototype Indra or Varuṇa as having been created by the Highest Deity Prajāpati or else elected by the gods on the score of superior merit.<sup>10</sup> A

<sup>9</sup> Even the non-Aryan with whom the Ṛgvedic people came in contact are mentioned as having chiefs or kings e.g. Pramaganda (a prince of the Kikāṭas) and the Dāsa chiefs Ilibīśa, Cumuri, Dhuni, Pipru and Varcin.

<sup>10</sup> See *Hindu Political Theories* by the present writer, 2nd ed. pp. 25-26. To the references there given add the following. *T.B.* II. 2. 7. 2 tells us how Prajāpati created the gods and the Asuras but not Indra who was created only afterwards at the request of the gods. *Ibid.*, II. 2. 10. 1 ff. says more directly how Indra was created *adhipati* of the gods by Prajāpati. In *P.B.* XV. 3. 30 we read how the gods at first did not yield sovereignty (*rājya*) to Varuṇa, but they yielded the same to him when he 'saw' a particular chant. More detailed is the story in *J.B.* III. 152 (= *Das Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl*, No. 188). There we are told how Varuṇa was originally the equal, as it were, of other deities. Desiring to be consecrated to kingship (*rājya*) over all the deities, he became the pupil of Prajāpati who taught him a particular chant. When he next approached the gods, they found in him the



still later tradition, evidently distorted by the Greek's projection of the early history of his own land into India's unfamiliar remote past, is recorded by Megasthenes. According to this tradition Dionysius (according to another account Heracles) with his descendants ruled India for 'many years' (according to the alternative account, 'for many generations') and thereafter most of the cities adopted the democratic form of government.<sup>11</sup> The true origin of Vedic monarchy is probably to be sought primarily in the military and other necessities of the people during the Indo-Iranian or even earlier times.<sup>12</sup>

### *Attributes of Rġvedic kingship*

The Rġvedic monarchy appears as yet in the tribal stage. This is proved conclusively by the fact that the king is often known simply by the tribal name, e.g. Yadu Turvaśa. It was not till the period of the *Yajus Samhitās* that the concept of territorial monarchy dawned upon the Indo-Aryans.<sup>13</sup>

Kingship in the Rġvedic times was evidently a position of the highest dignity. Repeatedly in the *Rġveda* the honorific epithet *rājan* is applied to the great gods Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa Agni, Brhas- form of their Father Prajāpati and putting him on the king's seat consecrated him to various royalties.

<sup>11</sup> McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, Calcutta edition, pp. 35-36. In K. P. Jayaswal's quotation (*Hindu Polity*, Pt. 1, p. 25) the suggestion of Greek influence is destroyed by the author's unwarranted change of 'cities' in the original passage into 'places'.

<sup>12</sup> According to Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben* (p. 162), Vedic monarchy was the necessary outcome of patriarchal origin of 'the Aryan State.' Rejecting this view the authors of VI., s.v. *rājan*, derive it, on the analogy of the Aryan invaders of Greece and German invaders of Britain from the position of the Vedic Aryans as invaders in a hostile territory. But this analogy itself is inconclusive, as it has been recently proved (Hodgkin *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, vol. I, p. 215) that kingship at least among the Angles existed long before their migration to Britain.

<sup>13</sup> For references see *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography and other Essays* by the present writer, p. 263.

pati, Soma and Yama as well as the multiple deities Ādityas, Āsṛins and so forth.<sup>14</sup> Still more significant is the repeated application of similes about kingship with reference to the gods. To take a few examples, in I. 67. 1 Agni is said to claim obedience like a king.<sup>15</sup> Even the king's movements are held out as objects of comparison with those of the gods. Thus I. 130. 1 opens with an invocation to Indra to come like a legitimate lord to the council of the wise, like a king and legitimate lord to the house.<sup>16</sup> In IV. 4. 1 Agni is said to march out like a mighty king with his retainers (or according to another interpretation, with his elephants).<sup>17</sup> In IX. 7. 5 and X. 43. 2 Soma and Indra respectively are said to sit like a king.<sup>18</sup> Similarly in VII. 18. 2 Indra is said to dwell like a king among his wives. In the same spirit the king's physical aspect is compared with that of the gods. In I. 85. 8 it is said of the Maruts that they are, like kings, men of over-powering aspect.<sup>19</sup> The brilliant picture of Varuṇa wearing a golden mantle and clad in new robes and sitting surrounded by his spies (I. 25. 10 ff.), as Zimmer<sup>20</sup> pointed out long ago, must have been drawn from life.<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere (X. 78. 1) the Maruts are compared with splendid kings of beautiful aspect.

14 For references see Griffith's tr. of the *Rgveda*, Indexes to vols I & II, s.v.

15 'In den Wäldern Sieger, unter Menschen der Freund, beansprucht er wie der König Gehorsam ohne nachzulassen.' Geldner, *Der Rgveda*, p. 79.

16 'Indra. Komm aus der Ferne Zu uns in eigner Person her, wie ein rechtmässiger Gebieter Zum Rate der Weisen, wie ein König und rechtmässiger Gebieter nach Hause'. Geldner, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-65.

17 *Ibha* in the original translated as 'retainer' by most scholars, but as 'elephant' by Geldner.

18 *Rājeva sidati and rājeva dasma niṣadab.*

19 'Wie die Könige sind die Männer von überwältigendem Anblick.' Geldner, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

20 *Op. cit.*, p. 167.

21 'Varuṇa, der Gesetzovollstrecker, hat sich in den Gewässern niedergelassen zur Ausübung der Herrschaft, der Klugsinnige.....Einen goldenen Mantel trägt Varuṇa und legt ein neues Gewand an. Rings herum sitzen seine Späher.' Geldner, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

The splendour of the king's aspect and raiment mentioned in the texts last-quoted was only the outward expression of his unexampled prosperity. The huge lists of gifts mentioned in the *Dānastutis* of the *Ṛgveda*,<sup>22</sup> after making due allowance for the exaggerations of the poets, testify to the king's extensive possessions of slaves, horses and cattle, along with chariots, ornaments and the like.

Endowed as it was with high dignity and prosperity, the position of the Ṛgvedic king was also one of great authority. The *Ṛgveda* even in its older parts is familiar with the three technical terms indicative of the king's dominion or authority, viz., *rājya*, *rāṣṭra* and above all *ḥṣatra*. These terms have already acquired sufficient importance to be freely applied to the gods.<sup>23</sup> *Rāṣṭra* and *Ḥṣatra*, again, are sufficiently significant to form the subject of prayer on behalf of kings.<sup>24</sup> The essence of the king's authority, namely subjection of the people to his rule, is clearly brought out in a few Ṛgvedic passages. In IV. 42. 1-2 Varuṇa declares that the lordship (*rāṣṭram*) belongs to him and further twice proclaims that

<sup>22</sup> See especially *maṇḍala* VIII.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. VII. 6. 2. referring to *rājya* of God Agni, VII. 34. 11 addressing Varuṇa as *rājā rāṣṭrānām*, X. 125. 3 applying to the Goddess of Speech the epithet *rāṣṭrī* and VII. 84. 2 mentioning the high dominion (*rāṣṭram bṛhat*) of Indra and Varuṇa. The 'high dominion' (*mahi ḥṣatram*) of Indra is referred to in VII. 28. 3. VII. 30. 1., etc., his 'supreme dominion' (*asuryam ḥṣatram*) in VII. 21. 7. The 'high dominion' of Savitar is mentioned in I. 24. 6 and that of Agni in IV. 12. 3; the 'resplendent dominion' (*jyotiṣmat ḥṣatram*) of the Ādityas in I. 136. 3. In I. 136. 1 reference is made to the *ḥṣatra* as well as *devatva* of Mitra and Varuṇa. The epithet *ḥṣatrasvī* (der die Herrschaft zu Ehren bringt', Geldner, *op. cit.*, p. 23) is applied to Varuṇa in I. 25. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Thus in X. 173 the poet prays on behalf of a newly consecrated king that his *rāṣṭra* may not fall away, that he may hold the *rāṣṭra* in his grasp, that Soma and Agni may keep his *rāṣṭra* steadfast. X. 174 contains the poet's prayer for the new king's attainment of *rāṣṭra*. We may also compare I. 160. 5. IV. 4. 8. VIII. 22. 7. VIII. 37. 7. X. 60. 5 etc. conveying the poet's prayer to the gods for gift of *ḥṣatra* to their patrons.

the gods obey Varuṇa's will (*kratum sacante varuṇasya devāḥ*). Similarly in IV. 50. 8 among the blessings attending a king who cherishes a Brāhmaṇa is mentioned the fact that the people themselves submit to him (*tasmai viśaḥ svayamevānamante*).

/ The Ṛgvedic king never claims divine descent. Even his office or his person is never regarded as divine. The only important exception is the Pūru king Trasadasyu who is mentioned in an obscure passage<sup>25</sup> as a demi-god (*ardhadeva*) and as resembling Indra. Trasadasyu's unique position is suggested by the fact that his mother is said in the same context to have obtained him by propitiating the gods at a time of great distress.<sup>26</sup>

### *The king's functions*

The above attributes of early Vedic kingship (namely high dignity, prosperity and authority) are to be connected with the important list of the monarch's functions. A very general description suggestive, however, of the king's supreme executive power occurs in a poet's prayer (III. 43. 5) to make the king 'the herdsman of his folk' (*gopā janasya*). In IX. 35. 5 the equivalent phrase *janasya gopatiḥ* is applied to the god Soma.<sup>27</sup> To judge from repeated references to the ubiquitous and watchful spies (*spāśaḥ*) of the gods,<sup>28</sup> the king had acquired at an early period an extensive criminal juris-

25 IV. 42. 8-9.

26 For a discussion of the above passage see *The Beginnings of Indian History* etc., pp. 131-2.

27 Equally vague is the epithet *ksapāvan* ('protector of the earth') applied to the king in a number of Ṛgvedic passages for which see *Vedic Index*, s.v.

28 Thus Varuṇa's spies are seated around the god who wears golden mail and shinning robes (I. 25. 13); they set forth upon their errand, surveying the two worlds (VII. 87. 3); Varuṇa's and Mitra's spies are true and never bewildered (VI. 67. 5); they are set in fields and houses for visiting every spot and for unceasing watch (VII. 61. 3). Reference to Agni's spies of fleetest motion occur in IV. 4. 3. In X. 10. 8 we read that the spies of the gods stand not still, never closing their eye-lids.



diction exercised by means of his agents. If we could follow Roth, (*St. Petersburg Dictionary*, s.v.) in taking *jīvagrbb* ('seizing alive') X. 97. 11 in the sense of a police official, this would be a decisive proof of criminal jurisdiction of the king in R̥gvedic times. But unhappily this explanation, has not been generally accepted. ✓

It is possible that the frequent references to the laws of Varuṇa (or of Varuṇa and Mitra) and guarding of the same by these deities imply that the earthly king was entitled to issue and enforce his decrees. Among such references may be mentioned I. 24. 10 referring to Varuṇa's holy laws (*adabdhāni varuṇasya vratāni*), I. 25. 10 applying to Varuṇa the epithet of *dhṛtavrata* and X. 10. 6. indicating greatness of the law of Varuṇa and Mitra (*brhanmitrasya varuṇasya dhāma*).<sup>29</sup>

From the frequent references to wars between Āryas and Dāsas as well as those between the Āryas themselves, it may be inferred that one of the king's main functions was to exercise the supreme command in war. It is not without significance that the most famous of the R̥gvedic wars, viz. that between Sudās and a confederate host, is known in three R̥gveda passages (VII. 33. 3 and 5; *ibid.*, 83. 8) as *dāśarājña* ('the battle with the ten kings'). In the simile of a warrior-king leading his army's wings (X. 75. 4) we have a direct reference to the king's exercise of his military command.

In a number of epithets applied to the great gods in the R̥gveda, we have, as it were, in solution one of the most characteristic functions of the king in the late Vedic as well as Smṛti-Arthasāstra State, viz., his guardianship of the Sacred Law. Among these epithets is *dhṛtavrata* applied to Mitra and Varuṇa and less often to

<sup>29</sup> Other references are V. 69. 1 where Mitra and Varuṇa are said to guard the ordinance that lasts for ever and VIII. 25. 8 where they are declared to have obtained their sway as rulers whose laws stand fast.

Agni, Indra and Savitr.<sup>30</sup> The equivalent epithet *vratapāḥ* is applied to Agni in VIII. 11. 1. Of the same nature is the designation *adhyakṣaḥ dharmanām* applied to Indra in VIII. 43. 24. In later times VS. X. 27 used the Rgvedic verse I. 25. 10 (applying *dhṛtaurata* to Varuṇa) in a Rājasūya formula and this in its turn was transferred by Ś.B. V. 4. 3. 12 to the earthly king, so as to make the latter the upholder of the sacred law (*dhṛtaurata*). Again, AB. VII. 13 applied to the king the epithet *dharmasya goptā* evidently by transference of *adhyakṣaḥ dharmanām* designating Indra in the Rgvedic passage just cited.

### *Limitations of Rgvedic kingship*

Though invested with important attributes and credited with the exercise of high civil and military functions, the early Vedic kingship was far from being absolute. To begin with, the conception of the omnipotent divine law (*vrata* or *dhāman*) and the all-powerful custom (*dharma* or *dharman*) ruled out from the first the king's claim to legislation. In the graded classification of the four castes, again, unconnected as yet with the concept of *Dharma*, we have a distant parallel of the Anglo-Saxon folk-right fixing the status as well as the privileges and obligations of each class by virtue of its membership of the folk.<sup>31</sup> We have next to mention the distinctive feature of the Vedic State, viz. that not only was the conception of public sacrifices alien to the genius of the people, but that the priestly function was from the first differentiated from the royal.<sup>32</sup> We

30 The title *dhṛtaurata* is applied to Varuṇa in I. 25. 8 and 10, I. 44. 14. I. 141. 9, II. 1. 4, X. 65. 5 etc. It is applied to Mitra and Varuṇa in I. 15. 6, VIII. 25. 2 and 8, VIII. 27. 3. In VI. 68. 10 it applies to Indra and Varuṇa, in VIII. 44. 25 to Agni, in VI. 19. 5 to Indra, in IV. 53. 4 to Savitar.

31 For the Anglo-Saxon Folk-right see Joliffe, *The Constitutional History of Mediaeval England*, p. 5.

32 For criticism of Zimmer's view *op. cit.*, pp. 195-96 that the king's son could act as *purohita*, see *Vedic Index*, s.v. *varṇa* and *Devāpi*.

may point also to the undefined check which the Rġvedic *sabbā* and *samiti* probably imposed upon the king.

Kingship in the *Rġveda*, as in later times, was anything but secure. The danger from rivals and enemies is repeatedly referred to in a royal coronation hymn (X. 174) of the last Rġvedic stratum. The immediately preceding hymn (X. 173) embodies in a series of pregnant similes the poet's passionate prayer for stability of the royal rule. May not, says the poet, the king's sway (*rāṣṭra*) fall away, may the king be steadfast (*dhruva*) and immovable (*avicācali*) like the mountain, like the god Indra, like the sky and earth and so on.

### Summary

Dim and indistinct as is the picture of kingship presented by the *Rġveda Samhitā*, we can broadly distinguish some of its principal features. We have first to note that no particular sanctity was attached to the king's person or family, there being only one recorded and evidently exceptional instance of a king being described as a demi-god. Still more significant is the fact that the king's function was from the first differentiated from that of the priest while the conception of a public priesthood was practically unknown. The king's authority was indicated thus early by a number of technical terms and it implied at least the submission of the people to his will. ↓ The king was evidently the highest executive authority and the supreme commander in war, and was perhaps already in control of the criminal jurisdiction. Kingship, then, was essentially a magistracy charged with exercise of the highest administrative and military functions. In fact we have in the *Rġveda* a number of titles of royal officers—*grāmanī*, *senānī* and perhaps also *madhyamaśi* and *jivagrbb*—as well as technical terms like *bali*, pointing to the rudiments of an administrative machinery. From the importance attached to divine law and custom we can safely infer that these operated as

checks on the king's authority. Restraints of a constitutional character were probably imposed by the existence of the Vedic Councils and Assemblies, but these unfortunately cannot be defined for want of data.

### *Constitutional types*

While monarchy is the normal type of constitution in the R̥gvedic polity, it has been held to present a number of sub-types. In his work *Altindisches Leben* Zimmer distinguishes two such principal varieties, namely hereditary and elective monarchies. Of the first and commoner type he finds examples in the four generations of kings among the Tṛtsus and the still longer genealogy of the Pūrus. References to the second type in which the king was elected by the *viśas* ('Clans' or 'Cantons'), are found, according to the same scholar, in X. 124. 8 giving the simile of the king's election by the *viś* and X. 173 conveying the poet's prayer for an elected king, not to speak of a whole series of *AV.* texts (I. 9, III. 4, IV. 22 etc.) uttered as benedictions on a newly consecrated ruler.<sup>33</sup> Besides the two types of constitutions set forth above, Zimmer cautiously suggests X. 97. 6 (simile of *rājans* attending a *samiti*) as implying a third form of government which was probably similar to that mentioned by Tacitus for Ancient Germany. In this type there was no single head in times of peace, the several members of the ruling family exercising the ruling power equally.<sup>34</sup> Zim-

33 Cf. Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 162:—"An der Spitze des Staates steht als Lenker des Ganzen der König (*rājan*). Die Herrscherwürde im Stamme ist in vielen Fällen eine erbliche: Vadhryaṣva, Divodāsa Atithigva, Pijavana, Sudās finden wir der Reihe nach als Urgrossvater, Grossvater, Vater und Sohn über die Tṛtsu gebieten; eine noch längere Genealogie lässt sich bei den Pūru herstellen. Nicht so bei allen Stämmen. Wir haben sichere Zeugnisse, dass auch Wahlmonarchien bestanden in denen die Könige von den Gauen gewählt wurden."

34 See Zimmer, *op. cit.*, p. 176 where after quoting the above text he observes:—"Dürfen wir etwa nach altgermanischem Vorbild unter den vedischen Stämmen



mer<sup>35</sup> indeed finds in *AV.* I. 9. 3, III. 4. 3, and IV. 22 evidence of a member of the royal family making himself sole lord (*ekarāt*) by encroaching upon his kinsmen (*sajāta*) such as was attempted, though in vain, by Arminius among the Teutonic Cherusci.

In considering the above view we may state at the out-set that all authorities seem to be agreed about the existence of hereditary monarchy in R̥gvedic times. As regards elective monarchy, however, Geldner<sup>36</sup> has argued that the crucial passage (*AV.* III. 4. 2) cited by Zimmer means not election of the king by the clan (or canton), but his acceptance by the subjects. This is based upon the equation of the *AV.* passage just cited (*tvām viśo vṛnatām rājyāya*) with *RV.* X. 173. 1 (*viśastvā sarvā vāñchantu*), leading to the conclusion that  $\sqrt{ur}$ . means *vāñch*. It may however be contended that the single R̥gvedic passage X. 173. 1 may at least with equal reason be equated with *RV.* X. 124. 8 (*viśo na rājānam vṛnānāb*) as well as *AV.* III. 4. just cited (*tvām viśo vṛnatām rājyāya*)<sup>36a</sup>

As for Zimmer's third type which may be called for want of a better title 'dynastic government', we may point out that the crucial passage in the *RV.* X. 97. 6 (*rājānāb samitāviva*) probably implies that the *rājans* ('princes') were the most distinguished members of the *Samiti* which evidently contained also popular elements.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand the *AV.* texts cited by Zimmer seem un-

neben erblichem Königthum und Wahlmonarchie noch eine dritte Staatsform annehmen? Die nämlich, dass im Frieden der Stamm kein einzelnes Oberhaupt hatte, sondern mehrere Glieder der Königlichen Familie die Herrschaft ausübten."

35 *Op. cit.*, pp. 176-177. Traces of this form of government are found by Zimmer, (p. 176 n) even in the Avesta.

36 *Vedische Studien*, 2. 303. In *VI. s.v. rājan* Geldner's view is taken to be the more probable, although it is admitted that the monarchy might have been sometimes elective.

36a It may be noted that Whitney translates *vṛnatām rājyāya* of *AV.* III. 4. 2. and Keith renders the same phrase in *TS.* III. 3. 9. as 'choose unto kingship.'

37 For references to the popular composition of the *samiti* in the *AV.* see below.

doubtedly to support his case. To take a few examples, in *AV.* I. 9. 3 the poet prays to Indra to set the king in supremacy over his kinsmen (*sajātā*); *ibid.* III. 4. 1. conveys the poet's prayer to the gods that the new king may bear rule as 'sole king'; in *ibid.* IV. 22. 1, 6 and 7 the wish is expressed that the king may reign as 'sole chief'. Evidence of a still more positive character in favour of the above constitutional type is found in some Brāhmaṇa texts to be quoted below.

### *The King's administration*

To the *Rgvedic* times we may trace the beginnings of an administrative system. We have already observed how the *RV.* refers to the spies of Varuṇa and other gods. These are probably reflections of the king's agents for exercise of criminal justice. Two titles occurring in the *RV.* hymn (X. 97. 11-12) viz. *madhyamaśi* and *jvagrbbh* ('seizing alive') were taken by earlier scholars to refer to the king's judicial and police officers respectively. But this interpretation has not found general acceptance.<sup>38</sup>

The *RV.* also shows the beginnings of financial administration. The technical term *bali* is used in some *RV.* passages (e.g. V. 1. 10) to mean an offering to a god. But in other passages it definitely refers to contributions from the subjects. To take one

<sup>38</sup> In *P.W. s.v.*, Roth took the similes of *madhyamaśi* X. 97. 12 and *jvagrbbh* X. 97. 11 to refer respectively to a judicial sentence and to a criminal escaping from the authorities. Zimmer, p. 186 accepts the interpretation of *madhyamaśi* as judge delivering judgment, but he thinks that *jvagrbbh* can be rendered as 'Verfolger.' Whitney, however, in translating *AV.* IV. 9. 4 renders *madhyamaśi* as 'the midmost man,' especially 'the leader about whom his men encamp, for his greater safety, in the night.' In *Glossar* 131 Geldner takes it to mean 'a third king who is neutral between two enemies.' According to VI. (*s.v. dharma* and *madhyamastha*) *madhyamaśi* probably refers to voluntary arbitration, while *madhyameṣṭhā* (*AV.* III. 8. 2), *madhyamastha* (*VS.* XXVII. 5) and *madhyamastheya* (*TS.* IV. 4. 5. 1) refer to a chief in relation to his followers.

example, X. 173. 6 expresses the poet's prayer to Indra to make the subjects (*viśaḥ*) bringers of *bali* (*balihṛtaḥ*) to a newly consecrated king alone. To judge by other analogies, the *bali* was at first probably voluntary in character but afterwards it became a compulsory payment. If we are to infer from later examples, the *bali* of the ṚV. was probably a charge on the agricultural produce as well as the live-stock of the villagers. Another source of the king's revenue hinted at in the ṚV. consisted of tribute (also called by the same title *bali*) exacted from conquered enemies. Thus in course of a hymn magnifying the achievements of Agni, we read (VII. 6. 5) how the god forced the people (*viś*) to become bringers of *bali* (*balihṛtaḥ*) to king Nahuṣa. In another hymn addressed to Indra we are told (VII. 18. 19) in connection with a certain victory won by the Gods that three specified peoples paid him a horse's head as *bali*. These passages are usually taken to imply the exaction of tribute from conquered enemies by earthly kings. It will appear from the above that the Ṛgvedic king's revenue was derived in part from contributions from subjects and partly from tribute of conquered communities. For the realization of these revenues the king must have employed appropriate agents about whose identity, however, we are unfortunately in the dark.<sup>39</sup>

We may trace back in the ṚV. the beginnings of military administration as a branch separate from the civil. The title *senāni* ('leader of the army') is applied figuratively to the God Indra (VII. 20. 5), to a dicer (X. 34. 12), to the God Manyu or Anger personified (X. 84. 2) and literally in IX. 96. 1. Another military office, that of *Pūrpati* ('lord of the fort') occurs in I. 173. 10. It has been doubted (Ludwig, *op. cit.*, III. 204, followed by VI. s.v.) whether the post was a permanent one similar to that of the *grāmanī*, or

<sup>39</sup> On the above see also *Hindu Revenue System* by the present writer, pp. 4-5. 10.

whether it was applied to a chief appointed over a fort when it was actually occupied against hostile attack. But at any rate the title is an exclusively military one.

An administrative title mentioned as early as in the *RV.* and destined to last far down to the early Buddhist times is *grāmanī*. The precise significance of this term has been a subject of dispute for a long time. According to Weber,<sup>40</sup> it was originally applied to a troop-leader and afterwards it signified the chief of the village. Combining the military and territorial associations of the term, Zimmer holds<sup>40a</sup> that the *grāmanī* was the leader of the local levy and was probably identical with the *vrājapati* of another *Rgvedic* text. It seems probable that the *grāmanī* was at first a troop-leader but afterwards became the village headman when the tribes had settled down in the land. If the *grāmanī* had acquired the latter sense in *Rgvedic* times, it would follow that the beginnings of village administration may be traced back to the *RV.* Whatever that may be, the *grāmanī*'s office had become even thus early proverbial for its prosperity. In X. 62. 11 a prince (or chief) is praised for his gifts under the titles *sahasradā* and *grāmanī*. Another passage (X. 107. 5-6) extols the giver of sacrificial gifts as first *grāmanī* (*grāmanīra-gram*), as *Ṛṣi*, as Brahman, as Soma chanter and so forth.

Reference may be made in the next place to the *Rgvedic* *Kṣattri* whose office was continued down to the *Yājus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* times. In VI. 13. 2 the title is applied metaphorically to the God Agni in the sense of 'distributor of good things to

40 *Über den rājasūya*, p. 65, n. 7:—"Grāmanī ist ursprünglich wohl: ein Schaarenführer, secundär der Vorsteher eines Dorfes; grāma nämlich, eines Stammes mit grāvan, giri, guru bedeutet ursprünglich wohl nur: schwere (eig. ermahnende), wichtige Masse, ein Haufen Mannschaft, erst secundär: Dorf."

40a *Op. cit.*, p. 171:—"Das Dorf wird repräsentiert durch den grāmanī 'Anführer des Heerbannes' der bestimmten Ortschaft; an einer andern Stelle (*RV.* 10. 179. 2) wird er vrājapati genannt."



his worshippers.' This would suggest that even thus early a court official called *Kṣattr* was charged with the duty of distributing food to the king and his retinue.

### *The king's retainers and dependants*

To judge from certain indications the germs of an aristocracy of service may have arisen already in the Rġvedic period. We refer in the first place to the terms *ibhas* and *ibhyas*, which according to some scholars apply to the class of king's retainers.<sup>41</sup> We may next consider the terms *upastis* and *stis* applying, as is generally held, to the group of the king's clients or dependants. That they were regarded more or less as personal possessions is suggested by goods or strength (*vāja*) and *stis* being mentioned alongside as blessings sought for from Indra (VII. 19. 11), by a poet's prayer to Agni to become the protector of *stis* and selves (X. 69. 4) and by a prayer to the same effect to the gods Mitra and Varuṇa (VII. 66. 3). The relation between patron and client is more directly suggested by a prayer (X. 97. 23) to "the most excellent plant whose *upastis* are other plants" to make the peoples "*upastis* to ourselves." We shall see presently what further light is thrown upon the composition of this class by an important AV. passage. Meanwhile we may state our view that the *upastis* consisted of officers and sections of the people standing in a position of immediate dependence on the king.

### *The order of princes or nobles*

Alongside the class of the king's retainers and dependants stood the order of princes or nobles. What high rank was enjoyed by the

<sup>41</sup> *Ibha* is translated as above by Roth, Ludwig, Zimmer and the authors of the *Vedic Index*. On the other hand it is taken by Pischel and Geldner in the traditional sense of 'an elephant.' The derivative word *ibhya* in the RV. is interpreted as 'retainer' by Roth, Ludwig and Zimmer, but as 'rich' by Pischel and Geldner. See *Vedic Index* and Walter Neisser, *Zum Wörterbuch des Rġveda*, I.

princes (*rājaputras*) is proved by X. 40. 3 comparing them with the divine Āśvins. The distinctive privilege of the nobles probably was that they fought from chariots and were equipped with mail armour, unlike the mass of freemen who fought on foot apparently without armour. A striking contrast between these two types of warriors is presented by V. 58. 4 where the arm-mighty hand-to-hand soldier (*muṣṭihā bāhujūtaḥ*), as well as the brave hero with good horses (*sadaśvo suvīraḥ*) is said to be the gift of the Maruts. Again, it is significant that repeatedly in *RV.* (I. 173. 4-5, II. 17. 3, VI. 21, 1; 22. 5; 29. 2; VIII. 4. 13; 33. 14; IX. 97, 49) Indra the great war-god is given the epithet of *ratheṣṭhā* (car-fighter). The vivid picture in VI. 75 (the so-called 'battle-hymn') of the warrior armed with formidable bow and poison-besmeared arrows, equipped with armour (*varmin*) and riding in his chariot as he rushes confidently into the fray, must have been drawn from contemporary life. What insignificant part was relatively played by the ordinary free-man is illustrated by a remarkable passage VI. 41. 5 contrasting the *viś* with wars.<sup>41a</sup> On the political status enjoyed by the nobles, the *RV.* is almost completely silent. But if we may infer from the complete absence of references to the king's grant of land or territorial jurisdictions to these people, their distinction must have been mainly of a personal character.

### *The position of the priestly class in the Rgvedic State*

The keynote of the Brāhmaṇa's position in the Vedic State and Society is struck in the famous and oft-quoted *Puruṣasūkta* (*RV.* X. 90). There we are told how the Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya, Vaiśya and

*s.v. ibha* for references to which we may add Geldner, *Der Rgveda*, p. 384 (for rendering of *ibha* as 'elephant').

<sup>41a</sup> *prāsmā aṁ prānāsu pra vikṣu* ('Guard us in wars, guard us among our people,' Griffith).

Śūdra represented (or were produced out of) the mouth, the arms, the thighs and the feet of the Cosmic Man at the beginning of Creation.<sup>42</sup> This evidently implies what may be called the Brāhmaṇa's Divine Right to social precedence by virtue of his original creation. Another late R̥V. hymn X. 109 introduces us more directly to the question of the Brāhmaṇa's civil status in these times. Here the king or the kṣatriya is enjoined under the most solemn threats and high promises to restore the Brāhmaṇa's wife to her husband. We read how the boundless sea, the fierce-flowing fire and the Heavenly floods exclaimed against the outrage on a Brāhmaṇa, how the Seven Ṛsis proclaimed the terrible might of the outraged wife, how Soma, Mitra and Varuṇa as well as Agni joined in her restoration and how on the other hand the kings having restored her shared the fullness of the earth and won for themselves extended sway. In the same context occurs the passage suggestive of the Brāhmaṇa's divine sanctity, namely that the *Brahmacārin* is a member of the god's own body (*sa devānāṃ bhavatyekamaṅgam*). The above passages evidently, while claiming for the Brāhmaṇa the protection of the High Gods and the elements and raising him further to divine sanctity, illustrate the insecurity of his civil liberties amid constant feuds with the dominant ruling class.

One form of priesthood known to Graeco-Roman peoples had no chance of development in Vedic India. The R̥V. presents before us priestly families like those of Viśvāmitra, Vaiśiṣṭha and Bharadvāja. But between these families and the priestly classes among the Greeks

42 The relevant verses (X. 90. 11-12) are given below in Griffith's translation:—

11 When they divided Puruṣa how many portions did they make?

What did they call his mouth, his arms?

What did they call his thighs and feet?

12 The Brāhmaṇ was his mouth; of both his arms was the rājanya made. His thighs became the Vaiśya, from his feet the Śūdra was produced.

These verses are reproduced in *AV.* XIX. 6. 6. *VS.* XXXI. 11 and *TA.* III. 12. 5.

and Romans there was one fundamental difference. The Roman Sacred Colleges were entrusted with guardianship of specific branches of public sacrifices. The Greek priestly families at Eleusis and other places were charged with definite cults. On the other hand the Vedic priestly families dealt with the same body of ritual based essentially on the Soma cult. The reasons for this different development in Vedic India have probably to be found in the weakness of the State organisation around which a permanent church could gather, in the public cults centering around the temple and last but not the least, in the reluctance of the singers themselves to organise the sacrificial ritual.<sup>43</sup>

### *The Purohita*

But though wanting in the organisation of public priesthood, the Brahmanical order possessed in the office of the *Purohita* ('domestic priest' of the king or great noble) the main prop of its power. The *Purohita* and his office called *purohiti* are known from the beginning of the historical period.<sup>44</sup> Among famous *purohitas* mentioned in the *RV.* are Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha (*Purohitas* of the Bharata king Sudas), Devāpi (*Purohita* of the Kuru king Śantanu) and an unnamed *purohita* of Kuruśravaṇa Trāsadyava, king of the Kurus. By a characteristic transference of human offices to the gods, Agni and Bṛhaspati (or Brahmanaspati) are frequently described as the *purohitas* of the gods. To the king's necessity for a *purohita* to be expressed later in a classical passage of *AB.* (VIII. 24), we have an allusion in a *RV.* passage (IV. 50. 8). Here we are told that the people themselves pay respects to the king, of whom the Brāhmaṇa

43 On the whole subject see Oldenberg. *Das Religion des Veda*, pp. 372-73. Cf. Keith. *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, pp. 290-91.

44 For references see *Alphabetical Index to the RV.* s.o.

goes before,—an evident allusion, as Oldenberg observes,<sup>44a</sup> to the office of the *purohita*, ('den Vorangestellten'). We are not here concerned with the priestly functions of the *purohita* except to note that he probably acted at first as the *hotr*, the singer *par excellence*, at the sacrifice.<sup>45</sup> As regards his public functions, we have several references in the *RV.* to prove that he acted even thus early in the capacity of protector of the realm (*rāstragopa*) as he was to be called in the later *AB.* text. To take a few examples, the *RV.* 'hymn of Sudās's triumph', contains the passage (VII. 18. 13):—

'May we in sacrifice conquer scornful Pūru.'

This has been taken by Geldner<sup>45a</sup> to mean that the priest prayed in the *sabhā* or the assembly-house while the king was engaged in the battle-field. In another passage (III. 33. 3) the poet Viśvāmित्रा claims to have helped king Bharata to cross the Vipāś and the Sūtudrī then in high flood, evidently during a raid or fight.

### *The Popular Assemblies*

Of the Popular Assemblies of the Rġvedic as indeed also of the later Vedic times, we can draw a picture only in vague and general outline. Here again we have to depend upon casual and obscure references in religious texts, unaided by positive data comparable to those embodied in charters, laws and historical works. We may begin by pointing out that the *sabhā* and the *samiti* in the technical sense of 'assembly' are mentioned only in the later parts of the *RV.* But the analogy of Graeco-Roman as well as of Ancient Teutonic Assemblies probably justifies the hypothesis that the Vedic Assemb-

44a *Das Legend des Veda*, p. 377. The passage in the original is as follows:—  
*tasmai viśah soayamevānamante yāsmīn brahmā pūrova eti.*

45 Oldenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 380-81.

45a *Vedische Studien*, 2, 135 n. 3. The relevant passage reads *jesma pūrum vidatthe mṛdhravācam.*



lies also dated from ancient times. Of the two Assemblies just mentioned, the *sabbhā* has been variously interpreted to mean "einer gewälteren, ja exklusiven versammlung, wohl einzig ausz brāhmaṇas und Maghavān,"<sup>45b</sup> a village assembly presided over by the *grāmaṇi* or *vṛājapati*<sup>45c</sup> and more recently as 'the standing and stationary body of selected men working under the authority of the *samiti*'<sup>45d</sup> and 'the Political Council' or the advisory council of the selected few.<sup>45e</sup> But none of these explanations seems to be free from objections.<sup>46</sup> It is however admitted on all hands that the *sabbhā* in the majority of passages means a Public Assembly.<sup>47</sup> On the political functions of the *sabbhā*, the *RV.* unfortunately throws little light. We have however in X. 71. 10 the term *Kilviṣaspr̥t* said of one victorious in the *sabbhā*. According to Ludwig<sup>47a</sup> this can only refer to the remover of the blame of the slain fastened on somebody through accusation. The judicial functions of the *sabbhā* seem to be alluded to more clearly in the Yajus Saṃhitā and Brāhmaṇa texts to be explained later.

45b Ludwig, *op. cit.*, 3, 254.

45c Zimmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-74.

45d K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Pt. I, p. 18.

45e N. C. Bandyopadhyaya, *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories* Part I p. 111.

46 Criticising Ludwig's view Bloomfield (*JAOS*. Vol. 19, pp. 13, 18) translates the relevant texts differently, e.g. *rayiḥ sabbhāvān* (IV. 2. 5) as 'wealth consisting of houses', *vidathyah sabbeyah* (I. 91. 20) as 'genteel, of a good house' and so forth. So also Geldner in his *RV.* translation renders 'rayiḥ sabbhāvān' separately as 'Besitz' and her (gute) Gesellschaft hat' and *vidathyah sabbeyah* as "der in Rat der weisen in der Versammlung tüchtig ist." Criticising Zimmer's view, the authors of VI. (s.v. *sabbhā*) prove from *SB.* III. 3. 4, 14 and *C.U.* V. 3, 6 that the king went to the *sabbhā* just as to the *samiti*. For discussion of the views of K. P. Jayaswal and N. C. Bandyopadhyaya see *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography and other Essays*, pp. 149-50.

47 Thus Bloomfield (*loc. cit.*), while finding for *sabbhā* the simple meaning of 'house' or 'parlour' in a number of *RV.* and *AV.* passages quoted by Ludwig, agrees that *sabbhā* generally means a public assembly.

47a *Op. cit.*, 3, 254.

The other Assembly called the *Samiti* has been generally taken to mean the Assembly of the Folk in which the king took part.<sup>48</sup> In recent times K. P. Jayaswal<sup>48a</sup> has attempted to prove that the *samiti* was a representative Assembly based on the village. But this interpretation has been shown elsewhere<sup>49</sup> to be without sufficient foundation. Regarding the functions of the *samiti*, Zimmer long ago suggested that the election of the king in case of elective monarchies was carried out by the *viś* assembled in the *samiti*. In X. 166 he found a probable reference to an influential candidate for the throne wishing to carry through his will in the teeth of the *samiti*. Whatever that may be, the *RV.* leaves no doubt that the *samiti* held a sufficiently important position to make its support a great asset to the king. In X. 166. 4 a king in course of a prayer for the destruction of rivals is made to say that he has mastered their *citta* (thought), their *vrata* (holy work) and their *samiti*.<sup>50</sup> In X. 191. 3 in course of another prayer for agreement in the assembly, the poet says that the *mantra* is common, the *samiti* is common, the *manas* (mind) is common and so their thought should be united.<sup>51</sup>

We have to consider in the next place some technical terms which have been taken to stand for assemblies. In X. 141. 4 the poet invokes the gods Indra, Vāyu and Brhaspati for obtaining the benevolence of all people in *Samgati*. Ludwig (*op. cit.*, 3. 253) long ago identified this *Samgati* with the *Samiti* and his view has been generally accepted. We now turn to the term *Vidatha* which

48 Zimmer (*op. cit.* p. 174) quotes IX. 92. 6 (simile of a true king hurrying to the *samiti*) as well as X. 11. 8 (reference to a *daivi samiti*) to prove that the king attended the *samiti*.

48a *Op. cit.*, Pt. I. p. 15.

49 *The Beginnings* etc. pp. 144-46.

50 *ā vascittamā vo vrata/mā vo'ham samitim dade*

51 *samāno mantrah samitib samāni/samānam manah saba cittameṣām/  
samānam mantramabhi mantraye vah/samānena vo haviṣā jūhomi//*

occurs in many *Rgvedic* passages and less often in the *AV*. The different views which have been held about the character of this body may be broadly divided into two classes. While some scholars have taken it to mean 'an assembly' at least in a derivative sense, others assign to it the meaning of 'sacrifice.' Even within the first group of scholars there is room for considerable difference of opinion, for unlike Roth who held it to be an assembly for secular or religious purposes or for war, Ludwig took it to mean primarily an assembly of Maghavans and Brāhmaṇas, while Zimmer understood it to be a smaller assembly than the *samiti*.<sup>52</sup>

We may conclude this portion of our narrative with a few general observations. Without attaching too much importance to the argument from analogy, we may quote here a parallel instance to illustrate the necessity of extreme caution in drawing general conclusions about the constitutional significance of Ancient Popular Assemblies. In the case of the Anglo-Saxon Council intensive research has recently shown that notwithstanding instances of dependence of individual kings on popular support, its functions were apparently of a deliberative character. Indeed frequent instances of expulsion or murder of kings suggest that the Council had no consti-

52 According to Roth (*PW. s.v.*), *vidatha* primarily means 'order', then 'the concrete body giving orders' and lastly 'the assembly for secular or religious purposes or for war.' Ludwig, (*Rv. tr.* III. 259 ff.) takes *vidatha* primarily to mean the assembly specially of Maghavans and Brāhmaṇas. Zimmer, (*op. cit.*, p. 177) quoting *RV.* II. 27. 12 (where a worshipper of the Ādityas is said to be *vidatheṣu praśastah*) takes it to be a smaller assembly than the *samiti*. On the other hand Oldenberg (*SBE.* vol. 46, p. 26) gives it the derivative sense of 'sacrifice.' According to Geldner (*op. cit.*, I. 147) *vidatha* has the primary sense of 'knowledge,' 'wisdom,' 'priestly lore' and the derivative sense of 'sacrifice' and 'spiritual authority.' So he translates (*Der Rgveda*) *vidatha* (II. 12. 5, III. 3. 3 etc.) as 'Weisheit,' *vidatheṣu samrāt* (III. 55. 7.) as 'der Allherr über das opfer,' and *vidathyona samrāt* (IV. 21. 2) as 'wie ein weiser König.' Lastly Bloomfield (*JAOS.* vol. 19, pp. 12 ff.) makes it mean 'the house' in the first instance and then the 'sacrifice as connected with the house.'

tutional means of enforcing its wishes against royalty. As regards the Council's alleged right of electing the king, it has been shown that after the tenth century the royal succession followed in the overwhelming majority of known instances, the election phrase notwithstanding, the ordinary system of primogeniture. In the few instances of actual election it amounted to mere recognition on the part of the chief men of the kingdom individually. In Bede's time the succession was not left to election but was settled beforehand by the reigning king.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> See on this subject R. Munro Chadwick, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, Excursus IV:—*The functions of the Council especially with reference to the election of kings.*

## CHAPTER II

### THE STATE IN THE ATHARVA-VEDA

#### *Introductory*

Between the charms, spells and incantations of the *AV Samhitā* and the hymns and prayers of the *RV. Samhitā* there is all the difference between a popular and a hieratic religion. But in respect of political institutions we can trace on the whole a close affinity between these two great compilations of sacred texts.

The tribes and peoples mentioned in the *AV.* as far as they go are on the whole common to the *RV.* To take a few instances, the *Vaitabavyas* otherwise called *Srñjayas* known to the *RV.* are characterised in *AV.* (V. 18. 10-11; 19. 11) as former mighty rulers who were ruined for oppressing Brāhmaṇas. So also the *Ruśamas* mentioned in *RV.* V. 30. 12-15 are referred to in *AV.* XX. 127. 1. On the other hand a new people, the *Kāśis*, whose kings figured in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads as champions of Vedic Culture, are mentioned in the *Paippalāda* recension of *AV.* V. 22. 14. As examples of the barbarians beyond the Aryan pale, *AV.* V. 22. 7-8 and 14 refers to the *Gandhāris*, the *Mūjavants*, the *Mahāvṛṣas*, the *Bablikas*, the *Aṅgas* and the *Magadhas*, of whom all but the first are unknown to the *RV.*

In the *AV.* as in the *RV.* the Āryas are still distinguished from the Dasyus or Dāsas. More important is the division into four *varṇas* (the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya, the Vaiśya, the Śūdra) which between themselves comprised the whole social system. An *AV.* text (XIX. 6) again reproduces with slight variations the famous *RV.* hymn (X. 90) describing the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra to have been formed out of the limbs of the Primeval



Man. In this is evidently implied the doctrine of social gradation of the four classes by virtue of what may be called their original creation.

### *Kingship in the Atharvaveda*

The *AV.* knows monarchy as the normal type of constitution. Among famous kings singled out for praise in this work are Kaurama, king of the Ruśamas (XX. 127. 1) and Parikṣit, king of the Kurus (XX. 127. 7-10).

The king's position, as in the *Rgveda*, is one of the highest dignity. In the fashion of the *RV.*, the *AV.* applies the honorific epithet *rājan* to the gods Varuṇa, Soma, Yama and Agni.<sup>1</sup> Significant of the dignified position of the *AV.* king is the fact that in III. 3. 1 and 5 in course of a prayer intended for restoration of an exiled king, Agni is invoked to lead with respect<sup>2</sup> "yon man of bestowed oblation," while Indra and Agni and all the gods are declared to have maintained for him security (*kṣema*) in the people (*viś*).

In other passages stress is laid upon the king's authority over his subjects. In its mildest form this principle is found in IV. 8. 4 conveying, as in *RV.* X. 173, the poet's prayer that all the people (*viśas*) may desire the king.<sup>3</sup> Of the same character is *AV.* VII. 94 (= *RV.* X. 173. 6) invoking Indra to make the people (*viś*) "like-minded, wholly ours."<sup>4</sup> A stronger note is sounded in XIX. 41 where the gods are invoked to make royalty, strength and force sub-

✓ 1 For references see Griffith's tr., Indexes to volumes I & II s.v. king; see also *A Complete Alphabetical Index of all the words in the Atharvaveda*, prepared and published by Swami Visheshwaranand and Swami Nityanand, s.v. Rājā.

2 *Namas* in the original; tr. as 'homage' by Whitney and Lanman, but here rendered in the more general sense of 'respect'.

3 *viśastvā sarvā vāñchantu.*

4 *yathā na Indrah kevalīr viśaḥ sammanaskarat.*

missive to the king.<sup>5</sup> More significant is III. 4 used in the ritual texts for the establishment of a king. It contains (*Ibid.*, 1) the poet's exhortation to the king to bear rule as 'the lord of the people, sole king' (*viśāṃ patir ekaṛāt*), to become 'one for waiting on, for respect' (*upasadyo namasyah*) and so forth. With this may be mentioned IV. 22 used, according to the ritual authorities, for victory in battle as well as for consecration of a king. In it the poet prays (*Ibid.*, 1-5) to Indra to 'make this man sole chief of the people' (*imaṃ viśāmekavṛṣaṃ kṛṇu*), to 'unman all his enemies' (*niramitrān-akṣṇubhi*), to 'make them subject to him in the contests for pre-eminence' (*śatruṃ randhaya sarvamasmai*), to make him 'the summit of authorities' (*varsma kṣatrāṇām*), to make him 'riches-lord of riches' and 'people-lord of people' (*dhanapatir-dhanānām viśāṃ viśpatih*), to make him 'the sole chief of the people' and 'uppermost of kings descended from Manu' (*ekavṛṣaṃ janānām-uta rājñām-uttamaṃ mānavānām*). In the above, it will be noticed that the king's attributes are said to comprise the highest dignity as well as unchallenged and supreme authority. *Rāstra* ('royalty') and the destruction of rivals are the blessings for which a chief prays to an amulet (*maṇi*) in I. 29. 4. The climax is reached in VI. 86 glorifying a person desirous of supremacy with the epithets 'chief of Indra,' 'chief of Heaven, chief of earth' as well as 'chief of all existence,' 'the summit of mankind,' and 'part-sharer of the gods.'<sup>6</sup> That the king's sway was sometimes felt to be oppressive is proved by VI. 40. 2

5 *tato rāṣṭraṃ balamojaś ca jātaṃ tadasmai devā upasaṃnamantu.*

6 The relevant passages in the original are as follows:—

*vṛṣendrasya vṛṣā divo vṛṣā pṛthivyā ayam/  
vṛṣā viśvasya bhūtasya tvam-ekavṛṣo bhava/  
samrād-asya surānām kakun-manuṣyānām/  
devānām-ardhabhāg-asi tvam-ekavṛṣo bhava/*

For *indrasya* in the above, Whitney and Lanman suggest *aindrasya* or *idhrasya*.

where in the midst of a prayer for peace and security the wish is expressed that the wrath of kings may be turned to other places (*anyatra rājñā mabbhiyātu manyuh*).<sup>7</sup>

Not only is kingship in the *AV.* vested with high dignity and authority, but there is a tendency to strengthen it with the tie of divine sanctity. In the delightful story of Parikṣit who is described in XX. 127 as a model king, he is acclaimed not only as 'soveran whom all people love, the king who ruleth over all', but also as 'exceeding mortals like a god.'<sup>8</sup> Other passages would seem to identify kingship with divinity. In the passage above cited (VI. 86. 3) a chief desirous of supremacy is greeted, as we have seen, with the epithet 'part-sharer of the gods.' This is reminiscent of the title *ardhadeva* applied to king Trasadasyu in the *R̥gvedic* text (IV. 42. 9). Again in IV. 8. 3 in course of a hymn used for the consecration of a king, a whole *R̥gvedic* verse III. 38. 4 addressed to the god Indra boldly transferred to the earthly king. This transference probably suggests a conscious attempt to invest the earthly king with the attributes of divine Indra.<sup>9</sup> Connection with Indra is directly ex-

7 The same qualities are ascribed metaphorically (VI. 98) to the god Indra in his aspect of ruler of divine subjects (*daivirviśah*). Here he is acclaimed not only as 'over-king among kings' (*adhirājo rājasu*), but also as 'one to be famed, to be praised, to be greeted, to be waited on, and to be revered' (*carṣṭya idyo vandyāscopasadyo namasyah*). Mention may be made of the long hymn XIII. 1 addressed to Rohita ("The Ruddy One", a form of the sun), which Bloomfield (quoted by Whitney and Lanman, p. 709) regarded as "an allegorical exaltation of a king and his queen." Here the poet prays (*Ibid.*, 2 and 10) that the Deity may mount the people that are sprung from him (*viśa ā roha tvadyonayo yāh*) and that the people may enter into the Deity with propitious mind (*tāstvā viśantu manasā śrivena*).

8 *rājño viśvajaninasya yo devomartyā ati*

*vaiśvānarasya sustutimā sunotā Parikṣitaḥ* | XX. 127. 7. The above follows Griffith's tr.

9 The verse in Whitney and Lanman's translation is as follows:—

'Him approaching all waited upon (*pari-bhūṣ*); clothing himself in fortune he goes about (*car*), having own brightness; great is that name of the virile (*urṣan*) Asura; having all forms, he approacheth immortal things.' Commenting on the

pressed in IV. 22. 7 where the king performing the consecration ceremony is called 'one having Indra as his companion' (*Indrasakhā*). Nevertheless we have the fundamental fact that the *AV.* does not claim for the king, any more than the *RV.*, a divine descent. In IV. 22. 5 quoted above, the poet is content to pray to Indra to make this king "the uppermost of kings descended from Manu" who is simply 'the first man', 'the father of the human race', according to the ideas of the Vedic Indians.

### *Rāṣṭra, rājya and kṣatra*

The *AV.* carries forward the conception of the technical terms known from the *Ṛgvedic* times, which relate to the king's dominion or authority and the like. We have an instance of a literal use of *rāṣṭra* ('kingdom') in the story of Parikṣit above quoted (XX. 127. 9-10). Of *rājya* ('royalty' or 'dominion') we have a metaphorical use in XI. 6. 15 and XVIII. 4. 31 where it is applied to the kingdom of the plants and that of Yama respectively. It is used in the literal sense of 'kingdom' or 'kingship' in III. 4. 2 (*tvāṃ viśo vṛṇatām rājyāya*) and IV. 8. 1 (*sa rājā rājyamanumanyatāmidaṃ*). In several passages *kṣatra* ('ruling power' or 'dominion') and *rāṣṭra* are closely associated with the king. Thus in XV. 10. 2 a king is enjoined to esteem his *vṛātya* guest as better than himself, for 'so does he not offend against *kṣatra*' and 'so does he not offend against *rāṣṭra*.'<sup>10</sup> In XIX. 30. 3-4 a magic amulet is praised as protector of *rāṣṭra* and increaser of *kṣatra*. In VI. 54 intended for increase of a person's superiority, Indra is invoked (*Ibid.*, 1 & 2) to increase his *kṣatra* 'as the rain the grass,' and make him superior

above, Lanman suggests that the phrase *asurasya nāma* in the original is a periphrasis of *asuryam*, 'the divinity that doth hedge a king.'

10 In the above *kṣatra* and *rāṣṭra* are translated by Whitney and Lanman as 'dominion' and 'royalty' respectively.

to his fellow in the sphere of *rāṣṭra*. The prayer for the king's resting at the summit of the *rāṣṭra* and for his unfading *kṣatra* occurs respectively in III. 4. 2 and VI. 98. 2. Other passages include *kṣatra* and *rāṣṭra* with similar attributes among the king's highest possessions. Take, e.g. the prayer for prosperity in XIX. 24 desiring for its object *rāṣṭra*, *mahi kṣatra* (high dominion), *āyu* (long life), *varcas* (lustre) and other qualities. In III. 5. 2. a magic amulet is invoked to bestow *kṣatra* (dominion) and *rayi* (wealth) upon a person and to make him familiar (?) in the sphere of *rāṣṭra*.<sup>11</sup> Another passage (X. 3. 12) invokes a magical amulet for bestowal of *rāṣṭra* and *kṣatra* ('Kingdom' and 'authority'), *paśu* (cattle) and *ojas* (strength). We have a longer list in XII. 5. 8 where a Kṣatriya who takes away a Brāhmaṇa's cow and oppresses a Brāhmaṇa is threatened with the loss of his *brahma* (spiritual power), *kṣatra*, *rāṣṭra*, *viś* (people), *twiṣiḥ* (brilliance), *yaśas* (fame) *varcas* (lustre) and *dravinam* (wealth). In a few other passages *kṣatra* is mentioned with *varcas* amongst the king's attributes. Thus V. 18. 4 tells us how a Brāhmaṇa's cow being eaten by a Rājanya takes away his *kṣatra* and *varcas* ('splendour') and ruins everything. So also XVIII. 2, 60, which is a stanza in a funeral hymn to be used in the case of a deceased Kṣatriya, requires the bow to be taken away from his hand along with his *kṣatra*, *varcas*, and *bala* ('strength').

The above passages throw some light upon the attributes of kingship in these times. Kingship at this period involved, it would seem, not only the possession of brilliance, fame and wealth, but also the control over the kingdom (*rāṣṭra*). This last anticipated the phenomenon of territorial monarchy which was to be fully evolved out of the primitive tribal kingship in the following period. In the next place, kingship according to the above passages involved

11 For *rāṣṭram* in this passage the Paippalada recension has *kṣatram*.



authority over the subjects (*viś*), a point to be repeatedly inculcated in the later *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. Another attribute of the king predicated in the above is *Brahma* usually translated as spiritual power. In the present context this term could only have been used in a metaphorical sense since the complete separation of the temporal and spiritual powers seems to be characteristic of the Vedic State from early times.

### *Relations between brahma and kṣatra*

Reference has just been made to the characteristic Vedic view of the separation of the temporal and spiritual powers. It is in the *AV* that the two terms indicative of these powers, viz., *brahma* and *kṣatra*, both of which are found in the *R̥gveda*, are first brought into mutual relation. The high significance as well as essential difference of these powers is hinted at in XV. 10. 3-4 where *brahman* ('sacrament') and *kṣatra*, deriving their origin from the mystical *vr̥t̥ya*, are said to enter *Br̥haspati* and *Indra* respectively. The conception of *brahma* and *kṣatra* as the two dominant powers is reflected in II. 15. 4 where in a charm against fever *brahma* and *kṣatra* are mentioned in a number of diads that do not fear and are not harmed.<sup>12</sup> Another passage (X. 5. 1-5) joining the sacrificial water successively with *Brahman* and *Kṣatra*, as well as *Indra*, and *Soma* in a charm for victory, illustrates the quasi-sanctity of these powers.

### *Summary*

In summing up the above facts it would appear that kingship in the *AV*, in spite of a strong tendency to invest it with divine sanctity, remained essentially, as in the *R̥gveda*, a magistracy charged with exercise of the highest administrative and military functions.

<sup>12</sup> *yathā brahma ca kṣatram ca na bibbīto na risyatah.*

The concepts of cosmic order (*ṛta*), divine ordinances (*vrata* or *dhāman*) and ancient custom (*prathamāni dharmāni* and *dharmam purānam*)<sup>13</sup> met with in the *AV.*, continued to operate as moral restraints on the king's powers. To judge by the significant term *rājakṛt* applied to the *rājans* (III. 5. 7), it would appear that certain elements may have come to act as constitutional checks on the king's authority. The instability of the king's position referred to in *RV.* X. 174 and the like is reflected in a larger measure by a series of *AV.* hymns intended for the restoration of an exiled king.

### *The King's administration*

As compared with the administration of the *Ṛgvedic* times, that of the *AV.* seems to have attained a certain degree of definiteness. The repeated references in the *AV.*<sup>14</sup> to the ever watchful spies of the gods suggest, as in the case of the *RV.*, the king's control over criminal jurisdiction by means of appropriate agents. Regarding crimes against property, we hear of thieves bound in stocks but whether this was done by the king's authority or by the robbed is uncertain.<sup>15</sup> We have, however, positive evidence that the *sabbhā* (or a committee of the same) acted as a court of justice in the times of the *AV.* and later *Saṃhitās*.

As regards finance, *AV.* repeatedly refers to the term *bali* signifying 'contributions from subjects' even in the *Ṛgvedic* times. In

13 For *dhāman* cf. II. 1. 3; for *dharma* VI. 51. 3; for *dharmāni prathamāni*, VII. 5. 1; for *vrata*, XVIII. 1. 5; for *dharmam purānam*, XVIII. 3. 1.

14 Cf. IV. 16. 4 where in a prayer to Varuṇa we read how the god's 'thousand-eyed' spies, proceeding from the sky, look over the earth beneath them (*diva spaśaḥ pra carantīdamasya sahasrākṣā ati paśyanti bhūmim*); V. 6. 3 where Soma's rays are described as spies never-closing their eyes and present everywhere with fetters for tying (*taśya spaśo na nimiṣanti bhūrṇayaḥ pade pade pāśinaḥ santi setave*). Also cf. XVIII. 1. 9 stating how the spies of the gods about here never stand still and never close their eye-lids (*na tiṣṭhanti na nimiṣantyete devānām spaśa iha ya caranti*).

15 See VI s.v. *tāyin* for references.

some passages (X. 7. 39; X. 8. 15; XIX. 55. 5; XI. 1. 6; XI. 6. 18-19 etc.) it is used in the metaphorical sense of 'tribute' or 'offering' paid by human or divine beings to the gods. But in other passages it definitely stands for contributions paid by the people to the king. Thus in III. 4. 3 in the midst of blessings invoked for the newly consecrated king, we are told that he shall see arrive much tribute. This passage would seem to imply that *bali* had already become a compulsory payment instead of a voluntary one. Another hymn (III. 29) which is concerned with the offering of a white-footed sheep at certain sacrifices begins thus:— 'What the kings share among themselves—the sixteenth of what is offered and bestowed—yon assessors (*sabbāsad*) of Yama; from that the white-footed sheep, given (as) ancestral offering, releases.' Further on we read:— 'He who gives a white-footed sheep commensurate with (his) world, he ascends unto the firmament, where a tax is not paid by a weak man for a stronger.' The purport of the whole passage is that the sacrificer by offering the sheep is released from payment that would be otherwise due to Yama's councillors on his admission into the other world. In the above the term translated as tax is in the original *śulka*, a new revenue item introduced here for the first time. Again, the striking picture of Heaven as a place where *śulka* is not paid by a weak man for a stronger<sup>16</sup> proves conclusively the compulsory character of the payment in question. In so far as the specific rate of 1/16 is concerned, it already proves the tax as consisting of a certain proportion of the property of the subjects. Another passage (IV. 22. 2) introduces us for the first time to definite heads of revenue anticipating those of the later *Arthaśāstra* and *Smṛtis*. Here the poet prays to Indra to portion the newly consecrated king in village, in horses, in kine.<sup>17</sup> In these items we have forerunners of the king's

16 *sa nākamabhyārohati yatra śulko na kriyate abalena baliyase.*

17 *emaṃ bhaja grāme aśveṣu goṣu.*

grainshare and dues from village cattle included among the king's regular receipts in later times. Of the agency employed by the king for the collection of these revenues, our texts unfortunately fail to give us any definite indication.<sup>18</sup>

Like the *RV.*, the *AV.* has a number of divine epithets which were afterwards transferred to the earthly king to indicate his guardianship of the sacred law. Amongst such epithets are *dhṛta-vrata* ('he whose laws stand first') and *dharmakṛt* ('he who keeps the law') applied to Indra in XX. 54. 2 and XX. 62. 6 respectively. Another passage (I. 25. 1) refers to the *dharmadhṛta* ('maintainers of duty') gods, meaning 'the gods who observe everlasting statutes of natural and moral order' (Griffith).

Not much light is thrown upon the branch of military administration in the Atharvavedic times. We have, however, a hint that the king was regarded as head of the army. In IV. 8. 2 he is acclaimed as slayer of his rivals (*sapatnabā*). Elsewhere (IV. 22. 7) at the end of a hymn for the success and prosperity of a king we are told: 'Of tiger-aspect, do thou beat down the foes; sole chief, having Indra as companion, having conquered, seize thou on the enjoyments of them that play the foe.'<sup>19</sup>

The *R̥gvedic grāmanī* reappears in the *AV.* If, as seems likely, he is now to be identified with the village headman, it would follow that the village was the unit of administration.<sup>20</sup> An *AV.* passage (XIX. 31. 12-13), identifying a magical amulet in turn with *grāmanī*, vigour, riches and plenty, suggests that the *grāmanī's* office was not only (as in the *R̥gveda*) one of high prosperity, but also of authority.

18 On the above cf. *Hindu Revenue System*, pp. 5-7.

19 *vyāghrapratikova bādhasva śatrūn*. The *AV.* hymns containing prayers for success in battle may be regarded in a general way as pointing to the military function of the king.

20 It is worth remarking that Whitney and Lanman (III. 5. 7 etc.) translate *grāmanī* as troop-leader.

Of greater importance is III. 5, 7 specifying *grāmaṇīs* and *sūtas* along with *rājāno rājakṛtāḥ* in a list of persons of the royal *entourage* whom a newly consecrated king desires to have as his subjects. As we understand this passage, it means that the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs* ranked as 'non-royal king-makers' by the side of the *rājans* who were 'royal king-makers'.<sup>21</sup> This important passage proves, in the first place, the inferior status of the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs* as compared with the *rājans* (princes or nobles). On the other hand it would seem to show that the *sūtas* and *grāmaṇīs* already enjoyed sufficient constitutional authority to be ranked in the list of persons in the closest contact with the king. Probably they had acquired even thus early the designation of 'king-makers' which was to be definitely applied to them in a *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* passage XIII. 2. 18. Of the precise authority exercised by them, our texts unfortunately do not give any indication.

In the above the *sūtas* (now mentioned for the first time) are associated with the *grāmaṇīs*, as they were destined to be in the later *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. If the title *sūta* has been correctly rendered as 'court-minstrel' or 'herald', it would prove how a mere officer of the royal court and household exercising formal functions had been exalted to high rank.<sup>22</sup>

Another official title now used for the first time, although in a metaphorical sense, is *sthapati*. In two charms (II. 32. 4 and V. 23. 11) for the destruction of worms we are told how the king as

<sup>21</sup> The passage in the original is as follows:

ye rājāno rājakṛtāḥ sūtā grāmaṇyaśca ye/  
upastin parṇa mahyaṃ tvam sarvān kṛṇvabhito janān/|

It is thus translated by Whitney and Lanman:—'They that are kings, king-makers, that are charioteers and troop-leaders—subjects to me do thou, O *parṇa*, make all people round about.' See Ch. III for arguments in favour of the contrary interpretation given above.

<sup>22</sup> For different interpretations of *sūta* see Ch. III. below.



well as the *sthapati* of these creatures had been killed.<sup>23</sup> The precise significance of *sthapati* is uncertain and it has been variously translated as 'governor' and 'chief judge'<sup>23a</sup> In either case the addition of a new official title would signify the growth of the administrative machine.

Coming to the minor officers of the royal household, we find that the R̥gvedic *kṣattr* ('distributor of food') is mentioned figuratively in III. 24. 7 where at the end of a harvest song two *Kṣattr*s of the God Prajāpati are invoked for fatness and plenty. The literal use of *kṣattr* is illustrated in V. 17. 12 ff. where among the blessings denied to a Kṣatriya in whose kingdom a Brahmin dame is detained is mentioned a golden-necklaced (*niṣkagrīva*) *kṣattā* along with a beautiful wife, a broad-headed ox (?), a black courser and so forth.

Another officer of the same humble rank as the *kṣattr* who now emerges into notice is the *pariveṣṭr* (attendant). In course of a hymn exalting the entertainment of guests we are told (IX. 6. 1-2) in highly metaphorical language that the *kṣattr* 'answering to the householder's summons' just answers the summons as an *agnīdh* while the *pariveṣṭr*s with drinking-vessels in their hands are just cup-bearing priests.

§ The *AV.* gives us a few glimpses of the authors' views of the characteristics of a good administration. That exertion and self-restraint were qualities expected from a king appears from XI. 5. 17 where we read that the king protects his realm by *tapas* and *brahmacarya*.<sup>24</sup> In the delightful pen-picture of a happy pair basking under the benign rule of king Parikṣit, we gather that the test of a good administration was held to be the peace and prosperity of

<sup>23</sup> *bato rājā kriminām utaiśām sthapatir batah*. On the interpretation of *sthapati* see VI. s.v.

<sup>23a</sup> See Ch. III. below for references.

<sup>24</sup> *brahmacaryeṇa tapasā rājā rāṣṭram vi rakṣati*.

the humble subject. In the story (XX. 127. 7-10) the husband, while ordering his house, tells his wife 'Mounting his throne, Parikṣit, best of all, hath given us peace and rest', while the wife replies in words bespeaking the abundance of her simple household, 'Which shall I set before thee, curds, gruel of milk or barley brew?'<sup>25</sup>

### *The King's clients.*

We have seen how the *RV.* refers to the class of king's or chief's dependants (*upastis* or *stis*). We are indebted to the *AV.* for some indications of the composition of this class. In a hymn to which reference has been made above a newly consecrated king prays (III. 5. 6-7) to a wooden amulet to make as his *upastis* ('subjects', Whitney) "all people round about" consisting specifically of clever chariot-makers and skilful smiths, the royal king-makers as well as the *sūtas* and the *grāmanīs*. These classes may be said to represent respectively the skilled craftsmen, the princes and the officials.<sup>26</sup> Of the high constitutional significance of these classes we have an indication in the fact to be noted in the following chapter viz. that the representative *rājanya* as well as *sūta* and *grāmanī* and carpenter and chariot-maker are included in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* among the *ratnins* (significantly called 'limbs of the

<sup>25</sup> Griffith's tr.

<sup>26</sup> The passage in the original is as follows:

ye dīvāno rathakārāḥ karmārā ye manīṣṇāḥ/  
upastīm paṇa mahyaṃ tvaṃ sarvān kṛṇvabbhito janān//  
ye rājāno rājakṛtāḥ sūtā grāmanyaśca ye/  
upastīm paṇa mahyaṃ tvaṃ sarvān kṛṇvabbhito janān//

Probably as divine prototypes of the earthly king-makers may be reckoned the *rāṣṭrabhṛts* ('kingdom-bearing gods') surrounding the Sun who are invoked along with *Robita* ('The Ruddy One' i.e. the Sun) to grant sovereignty in *AV.* XIII. 1. 35. In *AV.* X. 8. 15 the *rāṣṭrabhṛt* gods are described as bringing tribute apparently to the First Cause of Creation.

ruling power' and 'givers' and 'takers' of the kingdom), who participated in an important ceremony of the *rājasūya*.

*The status of classes.*

In *AV.* XIX. 6. 6<sup>27</sup> reproducing the *R̥gvedic* verses (X. 90. 11-12) above cited about the creation of the four classes out of the limbs of the Primeval Man is obviously embodied the order of their social precedence by virtue of their original creation. The status of these classes in the *AV.* and later texts is a logical corollary of this fundamental doctrine. Signs are not wanting to indicate that the *Śūdra* in the *AV.* is still regarded as a member of the community to which the other classes belong. Thus in X. 1. 3 the *Śūdra* along with the *Rājan*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and others is regarded as a potential maker of witchcraft (*Kṛtyā*). Several passages (XIX. 32. 8, XIX. 62 etc.) express the wish to be dear to *Śūdra* as well as *Ārya*. Nevertheless the low status of the *Śūdra* is sufficiently illustrated by such passages as V. 22. 7 where fever is asked to go to a lascivious *Śūdra* girl.

The *Vaiśya* in the *AV.* still takes part in fighting. Nevertheless the contrast is repeatedly drawn between the *rathin* (warrior fighting in his chariot) and the *muṣṭihan* or *patti* (foot-soldier). In VII. 62 we have the simile of a chariot-warrior (*rathin*) defeating a foot-soldier (*patti*). Another passage (XI. 10. 23-24) makes out a series of sharp contrasts between different classes of warriors, viz. one with and without corselet (*yaśca kavacī yaścākavaco*), those with or without armour (*ye varmiṇo ye varmāṇaḥ*), those with and without chariots (*ye rathino ye arathāḥ*) and those riding and not riding horses (*asādā ye ca sādinaḥ*).<sup>28</sup> The mailed warriors fighting

27 *brāhmaṇo'sya mukhamāśid bābū rājanyo'bhavat  
madbhyam tadasya yad vaiśyaḥ padbhyām śūdro'jāyata.*

28 The above follows Griffith's translation, Whitney's translation is slightly different.

on horseback or in chariots evidently represent in general the Rājanya, while those fighting on foot without armour are the Vaiśyas. These differences probably reacted on the relative status of these classes. In XV. 8 we read in course of glorification of the *vrātya* how the Rājanya sprang from him and arose towards the people, kinsmen, food and nourishment.<sup>29</sup> This passage, by claiming for the Rājanya a distinct origin and by placing him above the people along with food and nourishment, probably suggests that the class of nobles, unlike the ordinary freemen, enjoyed a position of authority along with high prosperity.

Like the *RV.* passage above quoted, several passages of *AV.* claim a kind of divinity for the Brāhmaṇas. Thus in VI. 12. 2 and XII. 4, 10 & 53 we find gods and Brāhmaṇas mentioned together. The true significance of these pretensions can be appreciated only in the light of a series of *AV.* hymns threatening as in *RV.* X. 109 with the consequences of oppressing a Brāhmaṇa. To take a few examples, *AV.* V. 17, adding a number of fresh verses to *RV.* X. 109, states as cited above that no beautiful wife or necklaced attendant (*kṣattrī*), no cattle or horse, comes to him in whose kingdom a Brāhmaṇa dame is detained through senseless love. Further on we read that not the Vaiśya or the Rājanya, but the Brāhmaṇa is her lord. In the following hymn (V. 18) the king (*nṛpati*) or the Rājanya is solemnly reminded of the dreadful consequences of devouring a Brāhmaṇa's cow and of robbing and injuring him. The man who counts the Brāhmaṇa as mere food, we are told, drinks poison, the blaspheemer who coveting his wealth slays him has a fire kindled in his own heart by Indra. The Brāhmaṇa is not to be injured, like fire, by one who holds himself dear; for Soma is his heir and Indra his pro-

29 *sō'raṇyata tato rājanyo'jāyata/  
sa viśaḥ sabandhūnannamannādyaṁ abhyudatiṣṭhat||*

tector against imprecation.<sup>30</sup> In fine the Brāhmaṇa is the connection of the gods (*devabandhu*). In the following hymn (V. 19) the poet points out the dreadful evils befalling the kingdom of one who eats a Brāhmaṇa's cow or desires to devour him or injures him or claims his wealth. These imprecations end, characteristically enough, with the statement noted below, viz. that the *samiti* (assembly) does not suit him and he wins no friend to his control. Still more dreadful are the imprecations of divine wrath uttered in XII. 5 and XIII. 3. 1-25, against the Kṣatriya robbing a Brāhmaṇa's cow and oppressing him. But is unnecessary to repeat them here. In the above group of passages the Brāhmaṇa is evidently credited not only with divine protection but also with quasi-divinity. An interesting anticipation of the doctrine of Soma's sovereignty over Brāhmaṇas found in the later *Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas* is contained in the statement that Soma is the Brāhmaṇa's heir. Nevertheless the only claim asserted in the following passage on the basis of these high pretensions is the security of the Brāhmaṇa's rights of person and property. Evidently, then, these rights were in constant danger of violation not only by aggressive kings or Kṣatriyas but even by powerful Vaiśyas.

### *The Popular Assemblies*

Coming to the Popular Assemblies of this period, we find in the *AV.* repeated references to the *sabhā* and the *samiti*, which confirm and to some extent supplement the meagre data in the *RV.* First, as regards the composition of the *samiti*, we have enough evidence to conclude that like the *sabhā* it was an assembly of the folk. Consider e.g. *AV.* XII. 1. 56 where the poet promises to speak glorious things of the Goddess Prthivī (earth deified) in 'what villages, what forests, what *sabhās* are upon this earth, what *saṃgrāmas* and

30 *Somo hyasya dāyāda Indro asyābbhiśastipāh.*



*samitis*.<sup>31</sup> With this we may connect *AV.* XV. 9. 2-3 where we read that the mystical *vrātya* went away to the *viś* and the *sabbhā* and the *samiti* and the *senā* and the *surā* followed him.<sup>32</sup> Putting the two texts together, we may conclude that the *sabbhā* and the *samiti* as well as the *senā* (or its equivalent *saṃgrāma*) and the *surā* (drinking parties?) were distinct, though closely associated bodies. Further the *sabbhā* and the *samiti* and the *senā-saṃgrāma* between themselves exhausted, according to the poet, the list of gatherings of the folk just as the villages and the forests comprised between them the whole tract of country.<sup>33</sup>

Some light is thrown by the *AV.* texts also upon the function of the *samiti*. According to Zimmer's interpretation of *AV.* III. 4. 2 (recalling *RV.* X. 174. 8 above cited), the *viś* ('clan' or 'canton') assembled in the *samiti* had the right of electing the king in the case of elective monarchies.<sup>34</sup> This interpretation was rejected by Geldner who took both the verses just quoted to refer to the acceptance of the king by the subjects.<sup>35</sup> As we have observed elsewhere,<sup>36</sup> this objection appears to us to be inconclusive. There is at any rate nothing improbable in the election of the king in special cases by the *samiti*.

Another function of the *samiti* appears to be hinted at in *AV.*

31 *ye grāmā yadaranyam yāb sabbhā adhibhūmyām/  
ye saṃgrāmāḥ samitayastesu cāru vadema te||*

32 *sa viśonu vyacalat/  
tām sabbhā ca samitiśca senā ca surā cānuvyacalan|*

33 On the above cf. *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography*, etc. p. 148. For criticism of K. P. Jayaswal's view namely that the village formed the basis of the constitution of the *Samiti*, see *ibid.*, pp. 142-46.

34 "In Wahlmonarchien fand Zweifelsohne durch die vereinigten *viś* in der *Samiti* die Erklärung des Herrschers statt." *Alt. Leben*, p. 175.

35 Explaining the *AV.* verse *tvām viśo vṛnatām rājyāya*, Geldner (*Vedische Studien*, II. 303) states that  $\sqrt{vṛ}$  means '*vāñch*' ('to desire') and *viśo* means 'subjects', not 'clan' or 'canton'.

36 Above, p. 17.

VIII. 10. 5. Here we are told how the mystical abstraction *virāi* successively ascended and descended in the *sabbhā*, the *samiti* and the *āmantrana*.<sup>37</sup> He who knows this, we further learn, becomes a *sabbhya*, a *sāmitya* and an *āmantranīya*. Obscure as this text undoubtedly is, it seems to show that the *sabbhā* and the *samiti* were institutions of the same nature as the *āmantrana*; they shared, in other words, the function of deliberation evidently on public affairs. More unequivocal is the testimony of *AV.* VII. 12 where the poet begins by characterising the *sabbhā* and the *samiti* as 'the two daughters of Prajāpati'—a tribute to the high status of these bodies in the Vedic polity. Then the poet prays that he 'may speak what is pleasant among those that have come together' (*saṃgatāb*), that all the *sabbhāsads* of the *sabbhā* 'may be of the like speech with him and give up their splendour and their discernment (*viññāna*) to himself,' that he may be the possessor of the fortune of the whole gathering (*samsad*) and so forth. The above passage, breathing an almost passionate desire for success in debate, conclusively proves that the *sabbhā* and the *samiti* enjoyed the unfettered right of deliberation relating no doubt to public affairs. The possession of such a right almost necessarily implies that the Popular Assemblies had a voice—unfortunately not defined in our texts—in the administration.

Of the two bodies above-mentioned, the *samiti* evidently as the Popular Assembly *par excellence* is treated in two *AV.* passages as the king's most valuable asset. In V. 19. 15 we are told at the end of a long list of terrific imprecations against the Kṣatriya injuring or robbing a Brāhmaṇa the simple threat that the *samiti* does not suit him and he wins no friend to do his will.<sup>38</sup> On the other

37 *Āmantrana*, tr. as 'consultation personified' by Griffith and rendered somewhat doubtfully by Whitney and Lanman as 'address.' We follow the former rendering.

38 *nāsmāi samitiḥ kalpate na mitraṃ nayate vāsam.*

hand VI. 88. 3 conveying a prayer for a newly elected king mentions at the end of a list of blessings that the *samiti* may suit him.<sup>39</sup>

Coming to the parallel institution of the *sabhā*, we find the *AV.* throwing little light upon its functions. In several passages (VII. 12, 2; VIII. 10. 8-13) the terms *sabhya* and *sabhāsada* are applied to the members of the *sabhā*. Between these classes a distinction is suggested in XIX. 55. 6 conveying a prayer to Agni *sabhyāḥ* for protection of one's *sabhā* as well as *sabhyāḥ sabhāsadaḥ*.<sup>40</sup> Evidently the *sabhya* (the man 'of the assembly') was an ordinary member, while the *sabhāsada* ('the sitter in the assembly') was a member in a special sense. That the *sabhāsada* at any rate held a high position is suggested by III. 29. 1 quoted above, where Yama's *sabhāsads* styled as kings (*rājans*) are said to divide one-sixteenth of what is offered-and-bestowed. From this passage we may infer that the *sabhāsads* of the earthly king also enjoyed the royal or princely rank with adequate perquisites. The *sabhāsada* of the *AV.* as well as of the later *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, it has indeed been suggested,<sup>41</sup> signified the body of assessors whose meetings were more frequent than those for general deliberation. This view has been sought to be supported by the significant dedication of the *sabhācara* to *dharma* ('justice') in the *Śatarudriya* text of *VS.* and *TB.* to be quoted below. It seems to us that the *sabhāsada* (or the *sabhācara*) was a member of the royal council and court unlike the *sabhya* who was a member of the general assembly. We have elsewhere shown grounds for holding that the *sabhā* was a popular body like the *samiti*. It is, however, probable that the tendency had asserted itself thus early, as in the

39 *dhruvāya te samitiḥ kalpatāmiha.*

40 *sabhyāḥ sabhām me pāhi ye ca sabhyāḥ sabhāsadaḥ.* This is translated by Whitney as follows:—"O thou of the assembly, protect my assembly and (them) who are of the assembly, sitters in the assembly."

41 Cf. VI., s.v. *sabhāsada*.

parallel case of the Witenagemot in the later Anglo-Saxon constitution, to create a smaller council for the highest executive and judicial work in place of the larger assembly.

We have next to refer to some terms which have been held to stand for assemblies. The *saṃgrāma* of the *ṚV.* and *AV.* texts quoted above has sometimes been identified<sup>42</sup> with the *saṃiti*. But the two *AV.* passages (XII. 1. 56 and XV. 9. 2-3) cited above clearly recognise them as distinct, though cognate, bodies. The *vidatha* of the *ṚV.* reappears in the *AV.* apparently in the same non-political sense. In VIII. 1. 6; XII. 2, 22 and 30, XX. 34. 18 and XVIII. 3. 70 the desire is expressed, as a much sought-for object, to speak to the *vidatha*. In a nuptial hymn the wish is expressed (XIV. 1. 20) that the bride may speak to the *vidatha*. The *vidatha*, then, would appear to be a place for general debate, unlike a political assembly. That the membership of the *vidatha* was held to be a great prize is proved by the phrase *sabbheyo vidathyaḥ* (fit for *sabhā* and *vidatha*) applied to a worshipper in XX. 128. 1.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories*, Part I, p. 114.

## CHAPTER III

### THE STATE IN THE YAJUS SAMHITĀS, THE BRĀHMANAS AND THE OLDER UPANISADS

#### *Introductory*

The *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmanas*, as they mark the completion of the Vedic sacrificial ritual, indicate also the climax of the Vedic State. The period, in the first place, was one of Indo-Aryan expansion eastward along the course of the Ganges and presumably also southward across the Malwa tableland to the Narmadā and beyond. This process resulted in the emergence of a number of tribes or peoples like the Kāśis, Kosalas and Videhas, who were almost unknown to the earlier literature but who stood in the vanguard of Aryan civilization during the late Brāhmaṇa and Upaniṣad periods. While such developments were taking place in the zones newly won for Vedic culture, the old tribal groups did not remain unchanged in the Indo-Aryan homeland. Many years ago Oldenberg gave good grounds for believing that two famous Ṛgvedic peoples—the Pūrus and the Bharatas—were merged in the Brāhmaṇa period into the Kuru people, while the Ṛgvedic Turvaśas, Yadus and other tribes were similarly amalgamated with the Pañcālās. This view has since been generally accepted.<sup>1</sup> With the Kurus and Pañcālās are joined in 'this firm middle established quarter,' according to a famous passage (VIII. 14) of *AB.*, the Vaśas and the Uśīnaras, who are mentioned if at all, but slightly, in the *Ṛgveda Samhitā*.<sup>2</sup> The tendency which led to the merging of the old

<sup>1</sup> See Oldenberg, *Buddha* (Eng. tr. pp. 403-10) and VI. s.v. *Kuru*, *Kṛvi* and *Pañcāla*. The *Kurus* and the *Kṛvis* (older name of *Pañcālās*) play an altogether insignificant part in the *RV.*

<sup>2</sup> A solitary reference to the *Uśīnaras* occurs in *RV.* X. 59. 10.



tribes into new groups in the Indo-Aryan homeland manifested itself also in the formation of more or less permanent tribal leagues. We find apparent references to such leagues between the Kurus, the Pāñcālās and the Sṛñjayas<sup>3</sup> in a number of passages in the Yajus Samhitās and the Brāhmaṇas.

In respect of divisions of Vedic society the same development is noticeable. A passage of the VS. (XXXI. 11) repeats with slight changes the famous doctrine of creation of the four classes out of different limbs of the Cosmic Man, that is found in the R̥gvedic *Puruṣasūkta* (X. 90. 11-12). Other passages in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* lay down theories of Cosmic creation bringing into strong relief what is implied in the above, viz. the relative status of the four classes derived from the nature of their original creation. In TS. (VII. 1. 1. 4-6) we are told how Prajāpati, desiring to create an offspring, created from his mouth, breast and arms, his middle and his feet successively the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra with corresponding *stomas*, metres, *sāman*, animals and (except in the case of the Śūdras) deities. Therefore the Brāhmaṇa and his cognates are the chief, the Rājanya and his compeers are strong, the Vaiśya and his fellows are to be eaten and are more numerous than others, while the Śūdra and his associates are dependant on others. The Śūdra, we are further told, is not fit for the sacrifice for he was not created after any gods. A similar legend occurs in P.B. VI. 1. 6-11 where we read that Prajāpati wishing to create the sacrifice produced out of his mouth, his breast and arms,

3 Cf. SB. I. 7. 2. 8 referring to the modes of sacrifice of the *Kuru-Pāñcālās* and performance of *Rājasūya* by their princes; TB. I. 8. 4. 1-2 referring to their princes marching forth in raids in the dewy season and returning in the hot season; AB. VIII. 14 referring to the consecration of the kings of the *Kuru-Pāñcālās*. It may be remarked that KS. X. 6. mentioning the *naimiṣa* sacrifice among the *Kuru-Pāñcālās* suggests that *Kurus* and *Pāñcālās* had one king while SB. II. 4. 4. 5. by mentioning one *purohita* in the service of both the *Kurus* and the *Sṛñjayas* implies a league of these peoples. For further references see VI. s.v. *kuru*.

his middle and his feet successively the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra with appropriate *stomas*, metres and (except in the case of the Śūdras) deities. Therefore "the Brāhmaṇa by his mouth is strongest," "the Rājanya's strength lies in his arms," "the Vaiśya does not decrease" and "is rich in cattle," while "the Brāhmaṇa and the Rājanya must live upon him;" lastly the Śūdra though rich in cattle is excluded from the sacrifice as "no deity had come into existence after him;" 'he does not bring it further than to the washing of the feet, for he was created out of the feet of Prajāpati.' In the above it will be noticed, the Brāhmaṇa is declared to be 'the chief' or 'the strongest' evidently because of his Vedic lore, the Rājanya as 'strong in his limbs', the Vaiśya as most numerous and prosperous but without security of property, while the Śūdra is said to be rich enough but without religious rights and with the function of serving the other classes.<sup>3a</sup>

In the rules of Vedic sacrificial ritual as given in these works, the above general ideas of the relative status of the four classes are given practical application. Indicative of sharp differences between these classes is the fact that ŚB. I. 1. 4. 12, in connection with a

3a In the later story of creation of the four classes to be found in BU. I. 4. 11-15, the Brahman existing alone in the beginning, is said to have created successively the classes of Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras among the Devas. "Among the Devas that Brahman existed as Agni (fire) only, among men as Brāhmaṇa, as Kṣatriya through the (divine) Kṣatriya, as Vaiśya through the (divine) Vaiśya, as Śūdra through the (divine) Śūdra. Therefore people wish for their future state among the Devas through Agni (the sacrificial fire) only; and among men through the Brāhmaṇa; for in these two forms did Brahman exist." "In this account of cosmic creation," as we have observed elsewhere (*Hindu Political Theories*, 2nd ed. p. 33 n), "the First Cause is represented as successively creating the divine prototypes of the Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra, while nothing is mentioned about the creation of the Brāhmaṇas. Indeed it is declared that while the original creative principle is manifested directly in the form of the Brāhmaṇa, it manifests itself as Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra through a derivative order of gods." From this is drawn the corollary that the Brāhmaṇa is the intermediary for gaining heaven.

certain ceremony of the piling of the fire-altar, prescribes different modes of address varying in degrees of politeness (*ebhi āgahi ādrava ādbhāva*) for the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra.<sup>4</sup> In another place (XIII. 8. 3. 11) *ŚB.* recommends funeral mounds of different sizes for the four classes. In the symbolical list of victims at the *puruṣamedha* ('human sacrifice'), a Brāhmaṇa, a Rājanya, a Vaiśya and a Śūdra are dedicated respectively to Brahman, Kṣatra, the Maruts and Penance (*VS.* XXX. 5; *ŚB.* XIII. 6. 2. 10; *TB.* III. 4. 1. 1). In complete accord with the above is the fact that repeatedly in our present works different modes of performing the ritual as well as different formulas are laid down for the three higher classes.<sup>5</sup>

### *Kingship in the Yajus Samhitās and Brāhmaṇas*

Like the *ṚV.* and the *AV.*, the *Samhitās* of the *Yajur Veda* and the *Brāhmaṇas* recognise kingship as the normal, if not universal, type of constitution. But here as in other respects the later works indicate some striking developments. We have seen how kingship in the *ṚV.* is still in the tribal stage. Reminiscences of this tribal kingship are still preserved in the ritual formulæ of the *Yajus Samhitās*. Thus at two successive stages of the Rājasūya—those relating to the sprinkling of the sacred waters and the offerings in honour of 'the Divine Quickeners' (*Devasūs*)—the royal sacrificer is announced to the assembled multitude as king of such and such a people or of the people generally.<sup>6</sup> A variant of the above formula in *TS.* I. 8. 12 carries the point somewhat further. Here the king is said to be

4 See also *KŚS.*, I. 19. 9.

5 For examples of different modes of performance of sacrifice, cf. *TS.* II. 5. 10. 1-2; *ŚB.* I. 3. 5. 10 ff. Some instances of use of different formulae for the different castes are given in *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography* etc., p. 284.

6 The variant forms are given below:—

'*Bharatas*' in *TS.* I. 8. 10 and 12; '*Kurus* and *Pañcālas*' in *Kāṇva* recension of *VS.* (Weber's edn. p. 306); '*janatā*' or *janate* in *KS.* XV. 7, *MS.* II. 6. 9; *VS.* IX. 40, X. 18.

'notified in this folk (*viś*), in this kingdom (*rāṣṭra*).'<sup>7</sup> In other words the concept of territorial kingship is added to that of kingship of the tribe, of the Folk. Another remarkable passage of the same *Samhitā* not only distinguishes between the two concepts, but treats the one as the complement of the other. Here we are told (II. 3. 3-4) that the king who has been or is being expelled, attains the people (*viś*), but not the kingdom (*rāṣṭra*) through a partial performance of a rite, while he attains both by its full performance. A still more developed stage is reached in our present works by the concept of universal monarchy, which involves, as we shall see presently, sovereignty over the whole Folk (*jānarājya*), as well as the whole Indian world (*prthivyai samudraparyantāyā ekaṛāt*).

### *Attributes of Kingship*

The *RV.*, as we have seen, hints at the high prosperity of the king. Direct evidence to this effect is furnished by two *Brāhmaṇa* passages explaining some *Rājasūya* formulas. *ŚB.* V. 4. 3. 15, explaining the car—unharnessing formula of *VS.* X. 23, says: —'The house-lords' position means prosperity: as much as he rules over, for the prosperity, the house-lordship, of that his lordship is thereby rendered free.'<sup>7</sup> Similarly *ŚB.* (V. 3. 3), in connection with the formula of offering to Agni Gr̥hapati (*VS.* IX. 39), says: "The house-lord's position means prosperity; as much as he rules over that Agni, the house-lord, leads him to hold the position of a master of the house." Elsewhere (XII. 8. 3. 6), *ŚB.*, in course of its exposition of the *Sautrāmanī* sacrifice, neatly observes that *rāṣṭra* ('royal dignity,' Eggeling) is of unlimited prosperity.<sup>8</sup>

Prosperity, however, is not the only attribute predicated of

7 *Śrīrūvai gārhapatam yāvato yāvata iṣṭe tadenamagnireva gr̥hapatirgārhapatam-abhiparinayati.*

8 *aparimitasamṛddhamamu vai rāṣṭram.*

kingship in these works. *ŚB.* (XIII. 2. 9. 2-5), explaining *VS.* (XXIII. 26), identifies *kṣatra* ('ruling power') with glory and associates it with food and security of possession. These ideas find expression in the legend of *Pr̥thu* (or *Pr̥thin* or *Pr̥thi*) son of *Veṇa*, reputed to be 'consecrated first of men', in other words, the first lawful king. In *ŚB.* (V. 3. 5. 4) *Pr̥thin* is said to have appropriated all food here on earth, while *PB.* (XIII. 5. 20) states that *Pr̥thu* acquired supremacy (*ādhipatya*) over both wild and domesticated animals by lauding a certain chant.

The high social status of the king is vividly, not to say dramatically, set forth by our present authorities in course of their exposition of a *Rājasūya* ceremony, namely that relating to a dialogue between the assembled priest (or priests) and the king seated on his throne. Five times, according to the White Yajus ritual,<sup>9</sup> the king addresses the Brahman priest as 'O Brahman'! The latter replies as many times with words beginning with 'Thou art Brahman', and followed in turn by the phrases, 'Thou art Savitr̥ of true impulsion,' 'Thou art Varuṇa of true power,' 'Thou art Indra, mighty through the people,' 'Thou art Rudra, the most kindly.' In the Black Yajus ritual, as also in the ritual of the other schools,<sup>10</sup> the king addresses the four chief priests (*Adhvaryu*, *Brahman*, *Hotr̥* and *Udgātṛ*) successively as 'O Brahman,' only to be greeted in turn as 'Thou O king, art the Brahman priest, Thou art Savitr̥ of true instigation,' 'Thou, O king, art the Brahman priest, Thou art Indra of true force,' 'Thou, O king, art the Brahman priest, Thou art Indra, the kindly,' 'Thou, O king, art the Brahman priest, 'Thou art Varuṇa of true rule.' These passages in our view reflect, not as has been said,<sup>10a</sup> the sovereignty of the king over the Brāhmaṇa, but rather

9 *VS.* X. 28; *ŚB.* V. 4. 4. 9-12; *KŚS.* XV. 7-8.

10 *TS.* I. 8. 16. *TB.* I. 7. 10. *Ap.ŚS.* XVIII. 18. 8-13; *BŚS.* XII. 14.

10a K. P. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, Pt. II. p. 37 and n. 1.



his pre-eminent social position in the Vedic State. With them we may compare the more direct reference in *SB.* V. 4. 2. 7 explaining a ritual of the *Rājasūya*, viz. that of the priest's pouring the remainder of the consecration water into the *Brāhmaṇa*'s vessel after the besprinkling ceremony. By this act, we are told, the *Brāhmaṇa* is made an object of respect after the king.

Along with the prosperity and dignity of the king's office, his high authority is emphasised in these works. The *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* assert this principle, as we shall presently see, in connection with their treatment of the concepts *ksatra* ('ruling power') and *viś* ('people'). An important ritual of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice according to these works consists in the king's winning a game of dice. In the White *Yajus* ritual<sup>10b</sup> after the *adhvaryu* priest and a tribesman (*sajāta*) have prepared the gaming ground with the sacrificial sword, the *adhvaryu* wins for the king a cow staked by the tribesman. According to the Black *Yajus* ritual,<sup>11</sup> after the *akṣāvāpa* had marked the gaming ground, a *Brāhmaṇa*, a *Kṣatriya*, a *Vaiśya*, and a *Sūdra* play for a cow, while the king invites three officials to become witnesses. In the former case the staking of a cow by the tribesmen and the king's winning the stake from him probably symbolises the royal sacrificer's rule over the common freeman. In the latter instance the staking of a cow by the representatives of the four classes and the king's taking three officials as his witnesses apparently signifies the solemn assertion of his rule over every class of his subjects.

An attribute of kingship noticed for the first time in our present works is the moral pre-eminence of the king. In connection with a certain ceremony of the *Rājasūya* (the king's return of the cow to

<sup>10b</sup> Cf. *VS.* X. 29; *SB.* V. 4. 4. 15-23; *KSS.* XV, 7. 11-20, etc.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *TS.* I. 8. 16; *TB.* I. 7. 10; *VSS.* III. 1. 1. 45; *Āp. SS.* XVIII. 18. 14-18 etc.

its owner after a mimic cow-raid), *ŚB.* V. 4. 3. 12 says that the sacrificer is not capable of a cruel deed.<sup>12</sup> Again, while commenting on a formula (*VS.* X. 27 = *RV.* I. 25. 10) used by the priest in touching the sacrificer's breast at the *Rājasūya*, *ŚB.* V. 4. 4. 5 boldly transfers the epithet *dhṛtaurata* from the god Varuṇa to the king as well as the *śrotriya* (learned Brāhmaṇa). This transference is sought to be justified on the ground that the king as well as the *śrotriya* is capable of speaking and doing only what is right.<sup>13</sup>

Along with these high attributes of the king, our present authorities developing a notion already known to the older works, throw out statements suggesting the king's quasi-divinity and rule by Divine Right. In connection with the dogmatic exposition of ceremonies of royal and imperial consecration, these works sometimes identify or associate the king (or the Kṣatriya sacrificer) with Indra, just as they identify the Brāhmaṇa with the god Brhaspati.<sup>14</sup> Such identifications may be thought to involve no more than a metaphor, since Indra is held to be the king of gods just as Brhaspati is the personification of the Brāhmaṇa power. More frequently in these works the royal sacrificer is declared by virtue of his participation in the sacrifice to attain the heavenly world and even the fellowship with one or other of the principal gods. Thus a formula accompanying a *Vājapeya* rite (mounting of the sacrificial post by the sacrificer and his wife) which is common to both the White and the Black Yajus schools,<sup>14a</sup> states that they have come to heaven,

12 *na vā ha eṣa krūrakarmaṇe bhavati yadyajamānaḥ.*

13 *dhṛtaurato vai rājā/ na, vā eṣa sarvasmā'iva vadanāya/ na sarvasmā'iva karmaṇe/ yadeva sādhu vaded yat sādhu kuryāt/ tasmai vā eṣa ca śrotriyaś-caitau ha vai dvau mānasyeṣu dhṛtauratau.*

14 Cf. *TS.* II. 4. 13 stating that rājanya is connected with Indra while Brhaspati is Brahman; *ŚB.* VI. 1. 11; 4-5; 8-9; 11-12 repeatedly identifying the Brāhmaṇa and Rājanya with Brhaspati and Indra respectively.

14a Cf. *VS.* IX. 21; *TS.* I. 7. 9; *MS.* I. 11. 3; *KS.* XIV. 1; *TB.* I. 3. 7. 5; *Ap.ŚS.* XVIII. 5. 14.

have become Prajāpati's children and have become immortal. Explaining a number of ceremonies of the same *Vājapeya* sacrifice, *ŚB.* (V. 2. 1. 11; 2. 1. 24; 3. 4. 23) declares that the sacrificer thereby becomes identical with Prajāpati or else becomes Prajāpati's child. In a formula accompanying another *Vājapeya* rite (that of besprinkling of the sacrificer by the priest), he is said to be consecrated to the *sāmrajya* ('supreme lordship') of Brhaspati,<sup>14b</sup> or to those of Brhaspati and Indra,<sup>14c</sup> or to those of Agni, Indra and Brhaspati.<sup>14d</sup> According to *ŚB.* V. 2. 2. 14 this means that the priest thereby 'makes him attain to the fellowship of Brhaspati and to co-existence in his world.' The priest winds up (V. 2. 2. 15) by acclaiming the sacrificer as 'All-ruler' and commending him to the protection of the gods of whom he has become one. Again, *ŚB.* XIII. 4. 4. 3, explaining an *Āśvamedha* ceremony (that of singing praises of the sacrificer along with those of the gods by masters of lute-players), declares that thereby they make him share the same world with the gods.<sup>15</sup> In connection with the same sacrifice *TB.* III. 9. 20. 2 says that whoever performs the *Āśvamedha* attains to fellowship with Prajāpati and lives in the same world with him. Pitched in a lower key is *PB.* XVIII. 10. 10 stating that he who is consecrated to the *Rājasūya* ascends the heavenly world.

In the above, it will be noticed, the king is associated or identified with the gods in general, and in some cases with the greatest deity of the *Brāhmaṇa* period, viz. Prajāpati. That such passages, however, are relatively of minor significance will appear from the fact that the sacrifice at this period was regarded "as a means to enter into the god-head of the gods and even to control the gods."<sup>16</sup>

14b Cf. *VS.* IX. 30. *ŚB.* V. 2. 2. 14.

14c Cf. *KS.* XIV. 2; *MS.* I. 11. 4.

14d Cf. *TS.* I. 7. 10; *TB.* I. 3. 8.

15 *tadyadenam devaiḥ saṁgāyanti devairevānam tatsalokam kurvanti.*

16 Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 182.

The gods themselves, it was held, owed their position to the omnipotent sacrifice. Further the king's divinity, such as it is, is not peculiar to himself but is shared by him with others equally entitled to the performance of the great sacrifices. We have however a remarkable *Brāhmaṇa* passage (*ŚB.* V. 1. 5. 14) explaining in connection with a *Rājasūya* rite the riddle of One ruling over Many. "And as to why a Rājanya shoots, he, the Rājanya, is most manifestly of Prajāpati. Hence while being One, he rules over Many."<sup>17</sup> With this we may connect other passages which seem to show that kingship was derived from divine favour. Thus in connection with a *Rājasūya* ceremony (making offerings to the Divine Quickeners), *ŚB.* (V. 3. 3. 6 and 9) states that *jyaisṭhya* ('lordship') and *paramatā* ('supreme state') are conferred upon the sacrificer by the Gods Indra Jyeṣṭha ('the most excellent') and Varuṇa Dharmapati ('the lord of the law') respectively. In connection with the same ceremony *TS.* I. 8. 10 more directly derives the kingdom (*rāṣṭra*) from divine favour.

The passages last cited, it would appear, hint at the king's rule by Divine Right and even by virtue of his divinity. Nevertheless it is significant that at the very important ceremony of invocation of 'the Divine Quickeners' at the *Rājasūya* the king is referred to as 'the son (or descendant) of such a man and the son of such a woman'<sup>17a</sup> 'as the descendant of such a man'<sup>17b</sup> and so forth. In the Black Yajūs ritual<sup>17c</sup> the king is similarly designated by his name

17 *tadyadrājanyah pravidhyati | eṣa vai prajāpateḥ pratyakṣatamām yadrājan-yastasmādekah san babūnāmīṣṭe*. On the above, cf. *Hindu Political Theories*, pp. 22-24. The king's inherent divinity, independently of that derived from the sacrifice, is suggested by such passages as *ŚB.* V. 4. 3. 4 and 7; 3. 5. 27:—"He (the sacrificer) is Indra for a twofold reason, viz. because he is a Kṣatriya and because he is a sacrificer."

17a *VS.* IX. 40; *MS.* II. 6. 6.

17b *TS.* I. 8. 10.

17c *TS.* I. 8. 12; *KS.* XV. 7; *MS.* II. 6. 9; *TB.* I. 7. 6. 7. etc.

and parentage in the formula of his announcement to a series of deities. These passages illustrate one of the fundamental characteristics of the Vedic State, viz. its belief in the human origin of kingship. The king is here described simply by the names of his parents, and not the slightest attempt is made on such a solemn occasion to trace back his ancestry to the gods.

We may consider here the important question of the king's ownership of the soil in Vedic times. The extreme view on this point is held by Hopkins<sup>18</sup> who argues from a number of passages that the king was recognised as the owner of all land, though somewhat inconsistently he states that the individual or the joint family also owned the land. This view has been criticised<sup>19</sup> on the ground that the texts quoted by Hopkins refer only to the king's exercise of political power and that the analogy of other Indo-European peoples does not support the theory of an original kingly ownership.

In discussing this problem we may first point out that the *Brāhmaṇa* passages quoted by Hopkins<sup>19a</sup> and stating that everyone here is fit to be eaten by the king except the *Brāhmaṇas* are not of much significance for our present purpose. For they probably embody in a nutshell the authors' view that the taxes and other burdens were a general disability from which only the favoured order of the priests was exempt. Of the same significance probably is the epithet 'devourer of the people' (*viśāmatā*) applied to the king in a coronation formula of the *Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>19b</sup> Again, the description of the *Vaiśya* as 'tributary to another, to be eaten by another, to be oppressed at will' in a classical *Brāhmaṇa* passage<sup>19c</sup> to be discussed below, refers, as we shall see later, to the general disabilities of the *Vaiśya*, including his liability to the *bali* tax and insecurity of per-

<sup>18</sup> *India old and new*, pp. 221 ff.

<sup>19</sup> See VI., s.v. *rājan*, *varṇa*.

<sup>19b</sup> *AB*. VIII. 12 and 17.

<sup>19a</sup> *SB*. V. 3. 3. 12; 4. 2. 3 etc.

<sup>19c</sup> See *AB*. VII. 29.



sonal rights. A direct reference to the king's connection with land occurs in a passage in the same *Brāhmaṇa*, which after taking it for granted that a *Brāhmaṇa*, a *Rājanya* and a *Vaiśya* beg the place of sacrifice from a *Kṣatriya* states that the *Kṣatriya* should beg the same from the Sun, "the divine lordly power (*daivī kṣatra*) and the overlord of these beings."<sup>20</sup> In view of the epithets applied to the Sun (the divine counterpart of the earthly king), this passage may probably be taken to refer to the king's political authority over the State territory rather than his ownership of the soil. Definitely indicative of the people's participation in the distribution of land is *ŚB.* VIII. 1. 7. 3. 4. In this passage we are told that 'to whomsoever the *Kṣatriya* with the approval of his *viś* (people or clan) grants a settlement, that is properly given.' We may take it to mean that while the king's gift of the land of the Folk in accordance with the consent of the people was held to conform to the customary law, he sometimes used to dispose of it by his arbitrary will. In earlier times probably the king could deal with such land only with the sanction of the assembly. But with the advance of the royal power this public land began to be looked upon to some extent as lying at the disposal of the Crown.<sup>21</sup>

We may conclude this discussion by quoting a striking passage<sup>22</sup> in the late *Kauśika Sūtra* of the *AV.* describing the higher of two types of royal consecration.<sup>23</sup> One important ritual of this

<sup>20</sup> See *AB.* VII. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *The Agrarian System in Ancient India*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>22</sup> Text in Bloomfield's ed., pp. 45-46, tr. by Caland, *Altindische Zauberritual*, pp. 39-41; summary in Victor Henry, *La magie dans l'Inde Antique*, pp. 146-148.

<sup>23</sup> The two types of Royal consecration are distinguished by the commentator Keśava as *laghu* (lower) and *mahā* (higher) *abhiṣeka*. The former, as Keśava explains, is intended for feudatory princes (*māṇḍalikas* and *sāmantas*), the heir-apparent (*yuvārāja*), the commander-in-chief (*senāpati*) and so forth. The latter is meant for a paramount ruler (*sārvabhauma*). See *The Kauśika Sūtra* of the

latter ceremony consists in the king's winning a game of dice three times in succession. As Caland<sup>24</sup> explains, this refers firstly to a play with a Brāhmaṇa, a Kṣatriya and a Vaiśya, secondly with a Brāhmaṇa and a Kṣatriya and thirdly with a Brāhmaṇa. The king thus wins the possessions of all his subjects. Then the Vaiśya respectfully approaches the king and prays for restoration of all these possessions. To this the king assents, mentioning by name the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, and the Vaiśya. Finally he desires that Dharma may reign in his kingdom. The above ceremony symbolising the king's winning and restoration of the possessions of the three higher classes, would seem to prove that private ownership was the rule in actual practice, though priestly pedantry recognised a temporary assumption of all property by the king by virtue of his performance of imperial consecration.

### *The king's functions*

↓ The functions of the Vedic king during the present period, in so far as they can be made out from the scanty data, indicate the usual development from earlier times. Already in the R̥gvedic times, as we have seen, the king appears to have possessed high executive power along with an extensive criminal jurisdiction exercised by means of appropriate agents. Indirect evidence of the king's increased exercise of executive functions is probably furnished by our present authorities making fuller references to older officials like the *sūta*, the *grāmanī* and the *sthapati* and the mention of new officials such as the *saciva* and the *mantrin*.<sup>25</sup> As regards the

*Atharva-veda with extracts from the commentaries of Dārila and Keçava*, ed. Maurice Bloomfield, p. 317.

<sup>24</sup> *Altindische Zauberritual*, p. 40 n.

<sup>25</sup> On the functions of these officials in the Late Vedic State, see below. For a specific instance of the king's exercise of his executive authority, cf. the above-

administration of justice by the king, the evidence is still of an indirect and general character. We begin with the *Yajus Samhitā* texts relating to the ceremony of drawing cups for Mitra and Varuṇa at the Soma sacrifice. Explaining this ceremony *TS.* VI. 4. 8. says, 'Therefore with a king as helper they slay a king, with a Vaiśya a Vaiśya, with a Śūdra a Śūdra,' while *KS.* XXVII. 4 says, 'Therefore with a Rājanya as a superintendent they slay a Vaiśya.'<sup>26</sup> These passages would seem to reflect two distinct kinds of judicial trials in capital cases that were evidently in vogue in these times. In the one form the Rājan (class of Rājanyas?), the Vaiśya and the Śūdra were apparently tried with the help of assessors of their respective classes. In the other type the Vaiśya was tried by an officer of the Rājanya class. It is permissible to think that the criminal jurisdiction in either case was exercised under the authority of the king. More direct evidence is furnished by two *ŚB.* passages<sup>26a</sup> explaining a particular ceremony of the *Rājasūya* viz. that of making offerings to the so-called 'Divine Quickeners'. We are there told that Indra Jyeṣṭha leads the sacrificer to *jyaiṣṭhya* ('lordship' or 'eminence'). Again we read that 'Varuṇa Dharmapati makes him *dharmapati* (lord of the law)', and 'That truly is the supreme state [*paramatā* in the original] when one is lord of the law, for whosoever attains to the supreme state, to him they come in matters of law.' This important extract probably refers to the king's supreme executive and judicial authority indicated by the attribute of *jyaiṣṭhya* and the epithet of *dharmapati*. In particular it probably implies a somewhat developed stage of the Vedic polity in which the king's justice prevailed over all private jurisdictions. We have to refer in this connection to another remarkable *Rājasūya* ritual, that of the priests'

quoted passage of *SB.* (VIII. 1. 7. 3. 4), which relates to his grant of land with or without the consent of the people.

<sup>26</sup> *tasmādrājanyenādbhyakṣeṇa vaiśyaṃ ghnanti.*

<sup>26a</sup> *V.* 3. 3. 6 and 9.

silently striking the king with sticks on the back. Explaining this ceremony, *ŚB.* V. 4. 4. 7 says that thereby they guide him safely over judicial punishment, whence the king is exempt from punishment.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand *KŚS.* XV. 7. 6. states that the priest thereby cleanses him from sin or else carries him beyond death. The ceremony evidently was one of the king's purification or acquisition of special privileges. We have probably to find in it a plea for the king's immunity from punishment, a royal privilege unknown to any other Vedic text and afterwards definitely denied in the rules of the *Smṛtis* and the *Arthaśāstra*.<sup>28</sup>

We have elsewhere referred to expressions like *dhṛtavrata*, *vratapāḥ* and *adhyakṣaḥ dharmaṇām* applied to the gods in the *RV.* as anticipating one of the most characteristic functions of the king in later times, viz. his guardianship of the sacred law. Turning to such references in the *Yajus Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas* we find that in *AB.* VIII. 12 and 23 describing the *Mahābbiṣeka* of Indra and of kings, the divine as well as human sacrificer is proclaimed among other epithets with the title *dharmasya goptā* ('Protector of the Law'). Another epithet given in the same proclamation formula is 'protector of Brahman' or 'protector' of *Brāhmaṇas* (*brahmaṇo goptā* in Indra's case, *brāhmaṇānām goptā* in the case of the king). This indicates that the king, according to the ideas of our authors, was entrusted in a special sense with guardianship of the Brahmanical order.

We have found evidence, as far back as in the *RV.*, of the king's possession of the supreme command in war. The *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* contain repeated references to the king's exercise of this function. From this point of view it is not perhaps of much

<sup>27</sup> *tasmādrājā dāṇḍyo yadenam dandavadhamatinayanti.*

<sup>28</sup> For criticism of different interpretations of the above texts by K. P. Jayaswal, see *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography* etc., pp. 256, 269.

moment that Indra, the king of the gods, is praised in some texts<sup>28a</sup> as one who in might leadeth forth the host (*saṃgrāma*) in battle. More important is the fact that some of the Yajus texts<sup>28b</sup> refer to the practice of the king's winning his share of the booty after a victory.<sup>29</sup> In the *Brāhmaṇas* the references are more explicit in character. The practice of Karu-Pañcāla kings (models of kingly form in these works) making their raids in the winter season is referred to in *TB.* (I. 8. 4. 1). In *KB.* (V. 5) we have the significant simile of a great king who, placing in front the advance-guard of his army, pursues his way in safety. *ŚB.* (XIII. 2. 2) explaining an *Aśvamedha* ceremony (that of binding the animal victims), declares that the priest thereby sharpens the front of the sacrificer's army, whence the front of the king's army is sure to become terrible. Again it says (*Ibid.* 7) that thereby the king, clad in mail, performs heroic deeds.<sup>30</sup> In other passages we find the king's military functions passing into his descriptive epithets or titles. Such are the titles *purāṃ bhetā* and *asurāṇāṃ hantā* applied to the god Indra and *amitrāṇāṃ hantā* applied to the human king in the proclamation formula of the *Mahābhiṣeka* ceremony referred to above (*AB.* VIII. 12 and 17). We have even reference to rites recalling those of the *AV.* above cited, for the king's success in battle. To take one example, *AB.* VIII. 10, while explaining the *Punarabhiṣeka* ritual, mentions rites for the Kṣatriya who at the meeting of two armies desires that he may conquer the army and for one who when about

28a *TS.* IV. 7. 15; *KS.* XXII. 15; *MS.* III. 16. 5.

28b *MS.* I. 10. 16; *KS.* XXVII. 13; *MS.* IV. 3. 1.

29 Cf. *MS.* I. 10. 16:—

*tas mādrājā saṃgrāmam jīvodaṣamudajate*; IV. 3. 1:—*udajayat.*

30 The commentator Harisvāmin's explanation of the first clause (quoted by Eggeling, *SBE.*, vol. XLIV. p. 299. n. 1) makes the reference more explicit. This is to the effect that the priest makes the sacrificial horse (symbolising the king) alone the head of the army.

to engage in a battle desires that he may conquer in the fight. Finally we may refer to some legends in the *Brāhmaṇas* connecting kingship with military command. Such is the legend of the election of Soma as king of the gods in *AB.* I. 14. Here we read that the gods, seeing themselves defeated by the *asuras* for lack of a king, elected Soma to the kingship: with Soma as king they conquered all the quarters.

### *Rājya, Rāṣṭra and Kṣatra*

In the above we have noticed some of the leading characteristics of the Vedic State according to the ideas of our present authors. Other characteristics are brought out in connection with their treatment of the closely allied concepts of *rājya*, *rāṣṭra* and *kṣatra* which, as we have seen, go back to the Ṛgvedic times. *Rājya* in *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* texts has not only the concrete sense of 'kingdom' but has also the abstract meaning of 'sovereign power'. Similarly *rāṣṭra* means not only a 'kingdom' but also 'royal sway' and even has the metaphorical sense of 'the wielder of the royal power.' *Kṣatra* is used in the sense of ruling power.<sup>31</sup> A passage

<sup>31</sup> *Rājya* is translated as 'sovereign power' in *VI. s.v.*, but Keith renders it as 'kingdom' in his tr. of *TS.* II. 1. 3-4; 6. 65; VII. 5. 8. 3 etc. and as 'kingdom' as well as 'kingship' in his tr. of *AB.* VII. 23. For *rāṣṭra* in the sense of 'kingdom' cf. *TS.* I. 8. 11; *MS.* II. 6. 7; *KS.* XV. 6; *SB.* V. 3. 4, 5-21 etc. where *rāṣṭrada* evidently means 'bestower of the kingdom'. It is translated by Keith both as 'kingdom' and as 'royal sway' in *AB.* VII. 31. It evidently means the 'wielder of the royal power' in *MS.* III. 3. 7. In *SB.* XIII. 1. 6. 3 the phrases *rāṣṭram te bhaviṣyanti* and *arāṣṭram te bhaviṣyanti* are respectively paraphrased by Eggeling as '[they] become (shares in) the royal sway' and '[they] are cut off from royal sway'. The similar phrase *rāṣṭram bhavati* found frequently in *PB.* is rendered by Caland as 'he obtains the reign over his subjects.' Evidently *rāṣṭra* is here metaphorically understood in the sense of 'the wielder of the royal power.' The derivatives *rāṣṭriya*, *rāṣṭriya* or *rāṣṭrī* meaning the possessor of the royal power are found in *MS.* II. 1. 12; III. 3. 7; *AB.* VII. 31. *SB.* XIII. 1. 6. 3 etc. *Kṣatra* is translated as 'nobility' and 'political power' (cf. *SBE.*, vol. XLIV. Index, *sv.*), and 'Royal power' (*SB.* XIII. 2. 9. 1 ff.) by Eggeling, as 'lordly power' by Keith (*TS.* tr.), as 'might' or



in *AB.* (VIII. 24), recalling some texts of *AV.* above quoted, mentions *kṣatra* and *rāṣṭra* with other attributes among the king's most precious possessions. If the *purohita* is appeased, we are told, he carries the king to the heavenly world (*svargaloka*), *kṣatra*, *bala* (might), *rāṣṭra* and *viś* (people). But if he is not appeased, he repels the king from all these things. Here, it will be observed, while the heavenly world is evidently described as the king's highest spiritual end, *kṣatra* and *rāṣṭra* are mentioned among his greatest temporal possessions. In thus equating kingship with *kṣatra* and *rāṣṭra*, the priestly author would seem to contemplate the king as the wielder of the royal authority and head of the State. The same view appears to be repeated in a more abstract form in *AB.* VII. 22 identifying *rāṣṭra* with *kṣatra*.<sup>32</sup> Other Brāhmaṇa passages bring the *kṣatra* into relation with the *rājanya* (class of nobles). Already in the early Vedic period we find the priestly authors visiting with high disapprobation the clandestine claims put forward by non-Kṣatriyas to Kṣatriya rank.<sup>33</sup> In the present period, no doubt because of the hardening of caste distinctions, the *rājanya* and the *kṣatra* tend to be identified with each other. In *AB.* (VIII. 1-4) we are repeatedly told that the *rājanya* is might and the *kṣatra* strength, thus making the two practically convertible terms.<sup>34</sup> The complete identity of the two is asserted in *ŚB.* (XIII. 4. 4. 1) and *AB.* (VII. 31) where we read that *kṣatra* is *rājanya*. —

### *Kṣatra and Viś*

We have in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* the largest body of notices concerning the relation between the ruling power 'Baronship' by Caland (*PB.* tr. XV. 3. 31 XVIII. 9. 6. etc.). The root-idea in all these translations is evidently 'the ruling power.'

32 *kṣatram vā eṣa prapadyate yo rāṣṭram prapadyate kṣatram hi rāṣṭram.*

33 Cf. *RV.* VII. 104. 13 = *AV.* VIII. 4. 13:—

*na vā u Somo vṛjinaṃ hinoti na kṣatriyaṃ mithuyā dhārayantam.*

34 *ojaḥ kṣatram vīryam rājanyah.*

(*ksatra*) and the people (*viś*) that is found in the Vedic literature. The distinction between the ruling Rājanya and the agricultural Vaiśya is well expressed in *TS.* II. 5. 10. 1 declaring that a Rājanya sacrifices in desire for power and the Vaiśya for cattle [cf. also *SB.* I. 3. 5. 10-11]. The superior advantages of the former as compared with the latter are well expressed in a remarkable passage in *SB.* (IX. 3. 1. 13-15) stating that *ksatra* and distinction attach to a single person while multiplicity attaches to the *viś*, that *ksatra* is distinct as it were, while *viś* is as it were indistinct, and that *ksatra* stands as it were, while *viś* sits.<sup>35</sup> According to the above view, then, unity, definiteness and activity are the distinctive attributes of the ruling power, while multiplicity, indefiniteness and passivity are the characteristic qualities of the people. The strength of the *ksatra* as contrasted with the disparateness of the *viś* is well expressed in *SB.* VIII. 7. 2. 2 ff. explaining certain methods of laying the bricks for the fire-altar. There we read that the priest thereby endows the *ksatra* pre-eminently with power and makes it more powerful than the *viś*: he makes the *viś* on the contrary less powerful than the *ksatra*, different in speech, of different thoughts.<sup>35a</sup> The relation of the *viś* to the *ksatra* is held, as a rule, to be that of political subjection. That the sovereign authority (*rāstra*) was credited with the power of oppressing the subjects (*viś*) is proved by *SB.* (XIII. 2. 9. 6-8). This passage, while explaining certain formulas of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, twice declares that 'the royal power (*ksatra*) indeed presses hard on the people, whence the wielder of the royal power is apt to strike down people'.<sup>36</sup> Other

35 With this we may compare *SB.* IX. 4. 13. 1-9 substituting for the last two phrases the following:—'*ksatra* is more prompt than *viś*,' '*viś* is made obedient and submissive to '*ksatra*,' '*viś* is made to look towards '*ksatra*'.

35a *viśam tateṣātrāḍaviryayatarāṃ karoti pṛthagvādinim nānācetasam.* In the above Eggeling translates *ksatra* as 'nobility' and *viś* as 'peasantry'.

36 *rāstrameva viśyābanti tasmādrāstro viśam ghātukab ... rāstro viśāmati.*

passages in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmanas* emphasize directly the dependence of the *viś* upon the *ṣatra*. We begin with a number of examples from the *Yajus Samhitās*. Explaining the formulas in connection with the ceremony of placing the fire on the altar, a series of these texts declares that thereby the priest attaches *viś* to *ṣatra*, the *ṣatra* speaks above the *viś*, the priest wins the *viś* for him, and he makes the *viś* obedient to him.<sup>37</sup> Another series of texts, explaining a list of victims at the Soma sacrifice similarly declares that the priest fastens the *viś* to him, makes the *viś* obedient to him and so forth.<sup>38</sup> The above ideas of the mutual relations of *ṣatra* and *viś* are repeated in the *Brāhmanas*. *ŚB.* (I. 3. 4. 5; II. 5. 2. 6) mentions a rite by which the *ṣatra* identified with Varuṇa is made superior to the people. 'Hence people here serve the *ṣatra* placed above them.' Another passage (*ŚB.* II. 5. 2. 27) identifying Indra with *ṣatra* and the Maruts with *viś* states that by performance of this specified rite the *ṣatra* becomes controller of the people.<sup>39</sup> Explaining another rite, *ŚB.* (XII. 7. 3. 12) says that thereby the priest makes the *viś* obedient to the *ṣatra*.<sup>40</sup> We have a number of passages similar to the above in *Brāhmanas* belonging to other schools. In *PB.* VI. 6. 1

With these texts cf. *ŚB.* XIII. 4. 4. 1:—*vajrena khalu vai ṣatram sprtam* ('*ṣatra* is won by the thunderbolt').

37 Cf. *KS.* XXI. 10:—*ṣatrāyaiva viśamanuniyukti ... tasmād ṣatram viśamativadati ... ṣatrameva viśo madhyameṣṭham karoti*; *MS.* III. 3. 10:—*viśam vā etatṣatrāya niyunaktyatho viśameva ṣatrāyānukām karoti ... viśo vā etatṣatram madhyameṣṭham karoti*; *TS.* V. 4. 7. 7:—*rāṣṭra eva viśamanubadhnāti ... rāṣṭram viśamativadati ... -viśamevāsmā anuvartmānam karoti*.

38 Cf. *KS.* XXIX. 9:—*viśameva ṣatrāyānuniyukti ... ojasaiiva vīryeṇa viśamṣatrāyopahati*; *MS.* IV. 7. 8:—*viśam vā etatṣatrāya niyunaktyatho viśameva ṣatrāyānukām karoti ... ojasā vā etadviśam ṣatrāya pariḡrhnāti*. In the above context *KS.* draws the conclusion that thereby all become payers of tribute to the king (*ete vai devā balibhṛto yajñāḥ Prajāpatis-tasmā ete sarvā haivam balim haranti*).

39 *ṣatram ha vā Indro viśo Marutaḥ ṣatram vai viśo niṣeddhā*.

40 *viśam tat ṣatrasyānuvartmānam karoti*.

we read in connection with the *Jyotiṣṭoma* sacrifice that the priests by performing a certain ritual raise the *rāṣṭra* over the *viś*, that is, as Caland explains, make the people subject to the Kṣatriya.<sup>41</sup> In the same context *PB.* VI. 10. 10-11 says that by uttering the appropriate *mantras* the priest attaches the *viś* to the sacrificer and the *viś* does not desert him. We are also told that the priest by might, by courage, afterwards encompasses for him the *viś* and the *viś* does not desert him.<sup>42</sup> Explaining the verses of three principal rites of the *Rājasūya*, *PB.* XVIII. 10. 9 says, "He encompasses for him the *viś* on both sides; the *viś* does not retire from him (but will serve him)."<sup>43</sup> Explaining another chant *PB.* XIX. 12. 6 states that thereby he makes the *viś* adjacent to him and the *viś* does not leave him. In the same context *PB.* significantly declares the *rājanya* (noble) to be the lord of men (*manuṣyāṇām adhipatiḥ*) and the end of men (*manuṣyāṇām antaḥ*). Of the same purport is *PB.* XIX. 16. 6 explaining how by performing a certain rite the priest attaches to him the *viś*, the cattle; and the *viś* does not leave him.<sup>43a</sup>

From time to time the *Brāhmaṇas*, by way of lending emphasis to their teaching, not only recommend certain methods of ritual performance producing the submission of the *viś* to the *kṣatra* or *rāṣṭra*, but also forbid other methods tending to have the contrary result. We may illustrate this by a number of examples. (*ŚB.* II. 5. 2. 34 justifies a certain ritual of the *Soma* sacrifice on the ground that it makes the *viś* (identified with the Maruts) the imitators, the followers of the *kṣatra* (identified with Varuṇa).<sup>44</sup> On the other hand it forbids

41 *viśyeva tad rāṣṭram adhyabanti.*

42 *oṣaśvāsmāi vīryeṇa viśam purastāt parigrhṇāti ... anapakrāmukā'smādiviḥ bhavati.*

43 *kṣatrenaiśvā'smai viśam ubhayataḥ parigrhṇātyanapa krāmukā'smādiviḥ bhavati.*

43a *viśameva'smai paśūnanunīyuna kṣatryanapakrāmukā'smādiviḥ bhavati.*

44 *kṣatrāyaiva itad viśam kṛtānukarāmanuvartmānam karoti pratyudyāminim ha kṣatrāya viśam kuryāt.*

the reverse rite because he would thereby make the *viś* equal in authority to the ruling power. Another passage (ŚB. VIII. 7. 1. 12) justifies a certain *agnicayana* rite on the ground that thereby he builds up the *kṣatra* above the *viś* while otherwise the *viś* would be placed above the *kṣatra*. With this we may compare ŚB. XIII. 2. 2. 15 forbidding a rite as making the *viś* equal and refractory to *kṣatra*, while recommending another rite making the *viś* obedient and submissive to *kṣatra*.<sup>45</sup> Similarly ŚB. XII. 7. 3. 15 tells us how the priest, by the improper method of drawing the cups at the *Sautrāmaṇi* sacrifice, would detach the *kṣatra* and *viś* from each other and thus create confusion between the higher and the lower. By following the proper method, on the other hand, he combines *kṣatra* and *viś* for the prevention of confusion between the higher and the lower.

While the political superiority of the ruling power over the people is the keynote of the ideas of our authors, they occasionally hold that the latter is the source of the former. Thus ŚB. XII. 7. 3. 8 states that the *kṣatra* is produced out of the *viś*. The two contradictory views are combined in ŚB. V. 3. 4. 10-11 explaining in connection with two specified kinds of consecration waters at the *Rajasūya* that the king is thereby made the lord as well as the offspring of the people.

### *Brahma, Kṣatra and Viś*

We have seen how our authorities in general emphasize the principle of dependence of the *viś* upon the *kṣatra*. But already in the *AV.*, as we have seen, *brahma* ('spiritual power') and *kṣatra* ('temporal power') rank as the two dominant forces in society. In harmony with these ideas our present authors tend to inculcate

45 *pratipratinīm ha te pratyudyāminīm kṣatrāya viśam kurvanti ... kṣatrāyaiva tadviśam kṛtānukarāmanuvartmānam karoti.*

in a number of passages what may be called the joint sovereignty of *brahma* and *kṣatra* over the *viś*. Take e.g., *TS.* III. 5. 7. 2-3 where in explanation of the different kinds of wood used for ladies at the New and the Full moon offerings, we are told that the priest thereby puts *brahma* as well as *kṣatra* over *viś*. Similarly *PB.* III. 9. 2 states in explanation of a certain laud that the priest thereby brings vigour and strength into *brahma* and *kṣatra* and makes *viś* subject to both.<sup>46</sup> This naturally leads us to the view stated in *ŚB.* XI. 2. 7. 16 viz. that *brahma* and *kṣatra* are established upon the people.<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere the precedence of the *Brāhmaṇa* and the *Kṣatriya* over the *Vaiśya* and the *Sūdra* is justified from the standpoint of social order. *ŚB.* VI. 4. 4. 3, 13, explaining a certain rite of keeping the sacred fire (*agnicayanah*) says:

“The *Brāhmaṇa* and the *Kṣatriya* never go behind the *Vaiśya* and the *Sūdra*, they walk thus in order to avoid a confusion between the good and the bad.”

By performing the rite just mentioned, the priest encloses the *Vaiśya* and the *Sūdra* on both sides by *brahma* and *kṣatra* and he makes them submissive.<sup>48</sup>

The joint lordship of the spiritual and temporal powers over the people, then, is according to our authors characteristic of the Vedic State. This position is, however, modified in other passages (no doubt in accordance with the extreme pretensions of the *Brāhmaṇical* order) so as to indicate that *viś* and *kṣatra* are alike dependent on the *brahma* or else that they stand in an order of graded dependence upon the latter. Thus *PB.* II. 8. 2 in connection with a certain laud states that the priest thereby brings strength and might

46 *brahmane caiva tatksatrāya ca viśamanugām karoti.*

47 *ubhe brahma ca kṣatram ca viśi pratisthite.*

48 *brahmanā caivaitatksatrena caitau varṇāvabhitāḥ parigrhṇīte' napakraminau kurute.*



in *brahma* and makes *kṣatra* and *viś* subject to *brahma*. Similarly PB. XI. 11. 8 and XV. 6. 3 explaining certain chantings says that the priest thereby brings *brahma* and *kṣatra* into union: he places *brahma* before *kṣatra* and he makes *kṣatra* and *viś* follow after *brahma*.<sup>48a</sup> On the other hand a passage in AB. II. 33 states that by uttering a certain formula of the Soma sacrifice in the proper order, the priest makes *kṣatra* dependent upon *brahma* and the *viś* dependent upon the *kṣatra*.

### *Brahma and kṣatra*

Scattered in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, we find the largest body of notices regarding the mutual relations of *brahma* and *kṣatra*, that occurs in the Vedic literature. Like some AV. passages already cited, several texts of our present authorities contemplate *brahma* and *kṣatra* as the two dominant powers of society. Thus ŚB. V. 3. 5. 8, explaining VS. X. 5 used at the offerings of the so-called *Pārtha* oblations at the *Rājasūya*, observes that the priest thereby sprinkles (endows) the sacrificer with *brahma* and *kṣatra* identified with *Brhaspati* and *Soma* respectively. Again ŚB. V. 3. 5. 32-33, amplyfying VS. X. 9 which relates to announcement by the sacrificer to various deities at the same *Rājasūya* sacrifice, says that thereby *brahma* and *kṣatra* (identified respectively with *Agni* and *Indra*) approve of his consecration. Similarly ŚB. XIII. 1. 5. 3 & 5 justifies a certain rite of the *Rājasūya* by saying that thereby the king's distinction is guarded on either side by *brahma* and *kṣatra*.<sup>49</sup>

While *brahma* and *kṣatra* are thus regarded as the dominant forces, there are in the eyes of our present authors fundamental

48a *brahma caiva tatkṣatram ca sayujīkaroti brahmaiva kṣatrasya purastānnidadhātī brahmaṇe kṣatram ca viśam cā'nuge karoti.*

49 *asya brahmaṇā ca kṣatreṇa cobhayataḥ śrīb parigrhitā bhavati.*

differences in their attributes and functions. In the legend of cosmic creation quoted above from *PB.* VI. 1. 6-11 the contrast between the Brāhmaṇa teaching Vedic lore and the Rājanya strong in fighting is well indicated by the statement that "the Brāhmaṇa by his mouth is the strongest" while "the Rājanya's strength lies in his arms." The different attributes of the two powers are well illustrated in a ritual prayer at the *Āsvamedha* sacrifice, which is found with slight changes in all versions of the *Yajus Samhitās*. In *VS.* XXII. 22 the formula commences with the following words:—

"In the priesthood (*brahman*) may the Brāhmaṇa be born, endowed with spiritual lustre (*brahmavarcas*). In the royal order (*kṣatra*) may the rājanya be born, heroic, skilled in archery, sure of his mark and a mighty car-fighter."

Explaining this text, *ŚB.* XIII. 1. 9. 1-2 says:—

"On the Brāhmaṇa he thereby bestows spiritual lustre whence of old the Brāhmaṇa was born as one endowed with spiritual lustre. ... On the rājanya he thereby bestows the grandeur of heroism, whence of old the rājanya was born as one heroic skilled in archery, certain of his mark and a mighty car-fighter."

In other words, spirituality is the permanent attribute of the Brāhmaṇa just as fighting is that of the Kṣatriya.<sup>50</sup> The contrast between the functions of the sacrificing Brāhmaṇa and the fighting rājanya is well expressed in *AB.* VII. 19 declaring the weapons of *brahman* to be those of sacrifice and those of *kṣatra* to be the horse-chariot, armour, bow and arrow. Elsewhere we are reminded of the incompatibility of *brahma* and *kṣatra* for each other's functions. Thus *ŚB.* V. 1. 1. 12, after declaring the *Rājasūya* unlike the *Vāja-*

<sup>50</sup> Almost identical with *VS.* XXII. 22 above quoted are the formulas in *TS.* VII. 5. 18; *KS.* V. 14; *MS.* XIII. 12. 6. The explanation of the *TS.* passage just cited in *TB.* III. 8. 13 closely agrees with that of *ŚB.* XIII. 1. 9. 1-2 above quoted.

*peya* to be the king's sacrifice, lays down the dictum that unsuited for kingship is the Brāhmaṇa. In other passages the contrast between *brahma* and *ksatra* leads to the view of their inherent antagonism. Take e.g. the remarkable passage of *ŚB.* XIII. 1. 5. 2-5 explaining an *Aśvamedha* rite which requires both a Brāhmaṇa and a Rājanya lute-player to sing for a year, the former by day and the latter by night. In the course of this explanation we learn not only that the Brāhmaṇa and the Rājanya are forms of *brahma* and *ksatra* respectively, but we are also directly told that *brahma* and *ksatra* take no delight in each other. Sacrifice and fulfilment, the passage continues, belongs to the Brāhmaṇa, while the Rājanya's strength is battle.<sup>51</sup>

The idea of inherent antagonism between *brahma* and *ksatra* is expressed with dramatic directness in *AB.* VII. 22 giving a preliminary explanation of the rites of royal consecration. At the beginning and at the conclusion of the sacrifice we have prayers to the following effect:—

‘May *brahma* guard me from *ksatra*. May *ksatra* guard me from *brahma*’.

Explaining these prayers, *AB.* says that he who has recourse to the sacrifice has recourse to *brahma* and the *brahma* thus delighted guards him from *ksatra*. Again it says that he who has recourse to kingship has recourse to *ksatra* and the *ksatra* thus delighted guards him from *brahma*. The above doctrine of the essential antagonism between the two powers is brought out still more forcibly in the ensuing ceremony and its dogmatic exposition (*AB.* VII. 23-24). There we are told that the Kṣatriya has before consecration Indra as his deity along with appropriate metre and *stoma* and is Rājanya in relationship. Because of his becoming a Brāhmaṇa after consecra-

51 *na vai brahmaṇi kṣatram ramate ... na vai kṣatre brahmavarcasam ramate ... iṣṭāpūrttam vai brāhmaṇasya ... yuddham vai rājanyasya viryayam.*

tion, Indra takes his power and the appropriate metre as well as the rest his other qualities, saying, 'He is becoming other than we: he is becoming the holy power: he is joining the holy power.' Hence the Kṣatriya before consecration should offer a libation with prayer to Indra not to take his power and to the others not to take away his other qualities. After consecration a Kṣatriya has Agni for his deity along with the appropriate metre and *stoma* and is the Brahman in relationship. Because of his assuming the Kṣatriya character at the end, Agni takes his brilliance and the corresponding metre and so forth his other qualities. Hence after the final offering he should offer libations with prayer to Agni and the rest not to take away his brilliance and other qualities.

"If the above passages emphasize the fundamental difference between the spiritual and temporal powers, other texts in our present works attempt in various ways to indicate their relative status. In general, as might be expected from the priestly authors of these works, the relation is stated to be that of domination of the temporal by the spiritual authority. Thus *TS.* II. 6. 2. 5, explaining the effect of a certain rite of the New- and Full-moon sacrifices, says that the priest thereby makes the *kṣatra* dependent on the Brāhmaṇa and therefore the Brāhmaṇa is the chief. The superiority of *brahma* over *kṣatra* is emphasized in *AB.* VIII. 1 & 4 where in course of explanation of certain rituals of the Soma sacrifice at the royal consecration, we are twice told that *brahma* is prior to *kṣatra*.<sup>51a</sup> In the same context the sacrificer is made to wish that his *rāṣṭra* ('sway') with *brahma* in front may be dread and unassailable.<sup>51b</sup> Another passage of the same *Brāhmaṇa*<sup>51c</sup> relating to the ceremony of *Punarbhiṣeka* ('renewed consecration of kings') points more definitely to

<sup>51a</sup> *kṣatrāt pūruṣaṁ brahma.*

<sup>51b</sup> *purastānma ugraṁ rāṣṭramavyathamasat.*

<sup>51c</sup> See *AB.* VIII. 9.

the dominance of the spiritual power. Here the sacrificer, after descending from his throne, is made thrice to utter the formula of salutation to *brahma* (*namo brahmane*). 'Verily thus', says the author, 'the *kṣatra* falls under the influence of the *brahma*'. Justifying this procedure the author continues, 'When the *kṣatra* falls under the influence of the *brahma*, that kingdom is prosperous, rich in heroes; in it a hero is born.'<sup>52</sup> The precedence of *brahma* over *kṣatra* is also indicated in other *Brāhmaṇa* texts. Thus *PB.* XI. 1. 2, explaining a certain *sāman* verse, says, "Therefore the *brahma* is yoked (ranged) before the *kṣatra*, for the *brahma* comes before the *kṣatra*."<sup>53</sup>

We may next turn to a remarkable *Brāhmaṇa* passage justifying by argument and legend the *Brāhmaṇa*'s domination over the *Kṣatriya*. Here we read that *brahma* is the conceiver (*abbigantā*) and the *kṣatriya* is the doer (*karttā*). For Mitra, the divine prototype of *brahma*, is intelligence (*kratū*) and Varuṇa, the prototype of *kṣatra*, is will (*dakṣa*). This is followed by an interesting legend concerning the original relations of the two deities. In the beginning Mitra and Varuṇa were separate. Then Mitra the *brahma*, could stand without Varuṇa the *kṣatra*, but Varuṇa could not stand without Mitra. 'Whatever deed Varuṇa did unsped by Mitra the *brahma*, therein forsooth he succeeded not.' Then Varuṇa invited the assistance of Mitra, promising to place him foremost. 'Whatever deed sped by Mitra, Varuṇa thenceforth did, in that he succeeded.' 'Hence it is quite proper that a *Brāhmaṇa* should be without a king.....It is, however, quite improper that a king should be without a *Brāhmaṇa*,

<sup>52</sup> *tad yatra vai brahmaṇaḥ kṣatram vaśameti tadraṣṭram samṛddham tat viravadābhāsmīn viro jāyate.* Keith translates *Kṣatra* and *Brahma* as usual, as 'the lordly power' and 'the holy power' respectively.

<sup>53</sup> *brahma tat pūrvam kṣatrādyauijyate brahma hi pūrvam kṣatrāt.* In the above Caland, as usual, translates *Brahma* and *Kṣatra* as 'priesthood' and 'nobility' respectively.

for whatever deed he does, unsped by Mitra the *brahma*, therein he succeeds not.<sup>53a</sup> Here, it will be observed, the dependence of *kṣatra* upon *brahma* is emphasized by interpreting their relations in terms of intelligence and will respectively. This lesson is driven home by the legend of their divine prototypes, which tends to prove that the spiritual power is the essential adjunct of the temporal, but not *vice versa*. From this it is but one step to draw the conclusion that the temporal power is derived from the spiritual. This last step is taken in *ŚB.* XII. 7. 3. 12 which categorically states that the *kṣatra* is produced out of *brahma*.<sup>54</sup>

It will appear from the above that the Vedic State, according to our present authors, was marked by dominance of the spiritual over the temporal power. It is, however, characteristic of the weakness of their position that the same authors elsewhere introduce us to views of an altogether different character. Harmony between *brahma* and *kṣatra* is made the subject of a simile in *TS.* VII. 5. 23 relating to an *Aśvamedha* rite.<sup>55</sup> The interdependence of *brahma* and *kṣatra* is expressed in *TS.* V. 1. 10. 3 explaining the *mantra* for placing the sacred fire in the altar. Here we read,

“Verily by means of the *brahma* he quickens the *kṣatra* and by *kṣatra* the *brahma*: therefore a Brāhmaṇa who has a Rājanya is superior to another Brāhmaṇa; therefore a Rājanya who has a Brāhmaṇa is superior to another Rājanya.”<sup>55a</sup>

<sup>53a</sup> *ŚB.* IV. 1. 4. 1-6.

<sup>54</sup> Of the social precedence of the Brāhmaṇa over the Kṣatriya we have a striking proof in the *Sunahṣepa* legend of *AB.* (VII. 13-18) and *ŚSS.* (XV. 17 ff.) where Varuṇa himself accepts a Brāhmaṇa boy in exchange for a Kṣatriya as sacrificial victim by saying that a Brāhmaṇa is higher than a Kṣatriya.

<sup>55</sup> ‘As the Brāhmaṇa with the Kṣatriya made harmony, so for me may favourable harmonies be made.’ Keith’s tr.

<sup>55a</sup> With this we may compare *KS.* XIX. 10:—*brahmaṇeva kṣatram saṁsyati kṣatrena brahma*. In the above *TS.* text Keith translates *brahma* and *kṣatra* as ‘holy power’ and ‘kingly power’ respectively, while *rājanya* is translated as ‘prince.’



This prepares us for *AB.* VIII. 2 stating that *brahma* and *kṣatra* are established on each other.<sup>56</sup>

While the above passages make out *brahma* and *kṣatra* more or less to be coordinate authorities, other texts tend to place the Kṣatriya directly above the Brāhmaṇa. The superior social status of the king as compared with the Brāhmaṇa is expressed in *ŚB.* I. 3. 2 (*Mādhyandina* recension) giving the simile of 'a Brāhmaṇa even now-a-days following in the train of a king' and *Ibid* (*Kāṇva* recension) applying the simile of a Brāhmaṇa also now-a-days following a Kṣatriya blessing him.<sup>57</sup> The same view is expressed in *ŚB.* V. 4. 2. 7 declaring the result of a certain *Rājasūya* rite to be that the Brāhmaṇa is made an object of respect after the king. Other passages insist on the political subjection of the Brāhmaṇa to the Kṣatriya. Thus *TS.* II. 5. 10. 1 mentions a rite by which the Brāhmaṇa, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra become obedient to the Rājanya.<sup>58</sup>

The sharp differences in the views of our authors regarding the relative superiority of *brahma* and *kṣatra* are reflected several times in the rituals of the different schools. Thus while the Brahman priest heads the list of *ratnins* at the *Rājasūya* sacrifice in all the other schools, the *ŚB.* by way of exception places the *purohita* after the *senāni*.<sup>58a</sup> Again, at the *Rājasūya* rite of the king's playing a game of dice, the sacrificial sword is passed round from the *adhvaryu* (or *purohita*) to the king, the king's brother and so on according to the White Yajus texts.<sup>58b</sup> Justifying this procedure *ŚB.* (*loc. cit.*) says "Indeed the king who is weaker than a Brāhmaṇa is stronger than

56. *brahmani khalu vai kṣatram pratisthitam kṣatre brahma.*

57 See Eggeling, *SBE.*, vol. XII. (p. 47) and *Ibid*, *Additions and Corrections* (p. 452).

58 *trayo vā anye rājanyāt puruṣā brāhmaṇo vaiśyaḥ śūdrastāneva anukān karoti.*

58a See chart opp. p. 249 in *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography* etc.

58b *VS.*, X. 29, *ŚB.*, V. 4. 4. 15-23, *KŚS.* XV. 7. 11-20.

his enemies." In the Black Yajus ritual,<sup>58c</sup> on the other hand, the sacrificial sword is passed round in succession from the Brahman priest to the king, his dear son or friend, his *purohita* and so on. With this relatively low position of the *purohita* next below the king and his dear friend may be compared *PB. XIX. 1. 4* placing him after the king's brother and son in a list of eight *Viras* (persons of distinction).<sup>59</sup>

*Types of kingship.*<sup>59a</sup>

We have seen how Zimmer on the authority of a few *RV.* and *AV.* texts distinguishes three types of constitutions in the earlier times. In the present period the first type, that of hereditary monarchy, seems to have been firmly established. We have a striking example of a kingdom inherited through ten generations (*daśapurusaṃ rājyam*) in the story (*ŚB. XII. 9. 3. 1-13*) of the *Srñjaya* king *Duṣṭarītu Paumsāyana*, who having been expelled from his throne was reinstated by his *purohita*. How regular the type of hereditary monarchy was held to be at this period is proved by the proclamation formula (*AB. VIII. 12* and *ibid. 17*) uttered by the All-Gods at the 'great consecration' of *Indra* and by 'the kingmakers' at the same ceremony for kings. In the course of the ceremony the king is greeted with the words *rājānam rājapitaram*. Whether the latter term is taken to mean 'the father of king' or 'the son whose father was a king,' we have here an undoubted reference to monarchy by hereditary succession. If we take it in the first sense, it would imply the practice known to Epic tradition as well as sober history, viz. that of associating the king's son as Crown-Prince with the Government.

<sup>58c</sup> *TS.*, I. 8. 16; *TB.*, I. 7. 10; *VSS.*, III. 1. 1. 45 *ApSS. XVIII. 18, 14-18; Ibid.*, 19. 6-8.

<sup>59</sup> On the above see also *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography* etc., p. 271.

<sup>59a</sup> On the alleged reference to 'kingless states' among the *Uttarakurus* and *Uttaramadras* in *AB. VII. 14*, see below.

Probably a direct reference to this practice is found in a maxim quoted in *SB.* XII. 8. 3. 19, viz. that a Kṣatriya is the consecrator of a Kṣatriya.<sup>60</sup>

As for the type of elective monarchy, the evidence in its favour for our present period is very meagre. In *AB.* I. 14 and VIII. 12 we have two stories relating to the election of Soma (or Indra) as their king by the gods.<sup>61</sup> But of the election of an earthly king we have hardly any trace in the *Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>62</sup>

As regards the type of dynastic government, we may mention that expressions like those of the *AV.* texts above quoted referring to the supremacy of the king over his kinsmen, are also found in the *Brāhmaṇas*. Thus *PB.* XV. 3. 30 after stating how Varuṇa acquired sovereignty over the gods by 'seeing' a particular chant, observes that if the sacrificer utters the same chant, his equals (*samānā*) will yield him supremacy (*śraiṣṭhya*). Still more significant is *SB.* (IX. 3. 4. 5.)

60 We may quote here the words of the commentator:—*kṣatriyo rājño'bbhīṣektā bhavati, pūroam hi rājaiva vṛddhaḥ kumāraṃ cābbhīṣicatīyarthah*.

61 In the first story it is declared that the gods and the demons fought with one another. The gods were beaten in all directions but one. Then they spoke to one another, "It is because we have no king that they are defeating us." Thereafter they created Soma king and through his help obtained victory in all directions. The second story introducing a description of the Great Consecration ceremony of Indra says, "The gods with Prajāpati said, 'He is of the gods the mightiest, the most powerful, the strongest, the most real, the best to accomplish; let us anoint him.' 'Be it so' (they replied). Thus (they did anoint) Indra."

62 In partial support of Zimmer's view of elective monarchy, the authors of VI., (s.v. rājan) quote from Yaska's *Nirukta* the legend of the Kuru king Devāpi superseding his elder brother Śamtanu on the throne. But the most relevant point for our present purpose, namely the relationship of the two is altogether wanting in the original *RV.* story (X. 98). According to K. P. Jayaswal (*Hindu Polity*, Part II. p. 40) a text in *AB.* VIII. 7 (*bhūrīti ya icchedimameva pratyannamadyāditya-atha ya icched doipuruṣam bhūrbhūva ityatha ya icchet tripuruṣam vā pratimaṃ vā bhūrbhūvaḥ svarīti*) refers to the coronation of the king-elect for his lifetime or for two or three generations. But the formula has for its object that the sacrificer may eat food, this being again and again declared in the context to be only one of the attributes of kingship. On the significance of the term *rājakṛtaḥ* applied to the *sūtas* and *grāmanīs* in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, see below.

where we are told, "Only he becomes king whom the (other) kings allow to assume the royal dignity, but not he whom they do not (allow to do so)."<sup>63</sup> It is impossible not to recognise in this striking passage a reference to the older form of dynastic government where the princes while sharing in the royal power recognise one of themselves as their head.<sup>64</sup>

By the latest Vedic phase the rule of monarchic succession by primogeniture had become so fixed that its violation was regarded as a dereliction of duty (*dharmavyatikrama*). The *Bṛhad-devatā* (VII. 155-7 and VIII. 1-9), explaining *RV.* X. 98, tells the story of the brothers Devāpi and Śamṭanu of the Kuru race. The former being the elder, the people asked him after his father's death to assume the sovereignty (*rājya*). But the latter, declining the honour, proposed the consecration of Śamṭanu who became king. For this *dharmavyatikrama* the rains did not fall in that kingdom for twelve years. Accordingly Śamṭanu with his subjects offered the sovereignty to Devāpi, who, declaring himself unworthy of the honour, performed for him as his *purohita* rites productive of rain. The story is told in practically the same form in Yāska's *Nirukta* (II. 10).

### *Royal and Imperial titles*

Let us consider in the next place the significance of a number of royal and imperial titles—*adhirāja* *adhipati*, *virāt*, *svarāt* and

63 *yasmai vai rājāno rājayamanumanyante sa rājā bhavati na sa yasmai na.*

The same sense is probably conveyed in *PB.* XIX. 1 where we read: *te tu vai rājeti vadeyur yaṃ ha rājā rājānam ha kuryāt.* ('He, forsooth, may be called a king, who is made a king by a king'—Caland).

64 For a historical parallel see H. Munro Chadwick, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, pp. 306-7. There he proves after a thorough examination of all available data that in Anglo-Saxon England the kingdom was originally recognised as the property not of the king, but of the royal family. In the same context he notices similar forms of government to have prevailed among other Teutonic peoples such as the Danes, the people of Norway and Sweden and probably also the Cherusci of Ancient Germany.

*samrāt*—which the present period seems to have inherited from older times. *Adhirāja* ('over-king among kings') is used of a human worshipper in *RV.* X. 128. 9, while in *AV.* VI. 98. 1 Indra is said to reign among kings as *adhirāja* and in *ibid.* IX. 10. 24 the mystical *virāt* is said to be the *adhirāja* of minor deities called the *Sādhyas*. In the *Yajus Samhitā* texts *adhirāja* is applied both to the divine and the human overlord. Thus while *TS.* II. 4. 14, *KS.* VII. 17, *MS.* IV. 12. 3 etc., apply the title to Indra, *MS.* II. 2. 11 mentions a special rite for attaining *ādhirājya* by means of an offering to Indra *Adhirāja*. This last rite, we are told, is to be performed where the kings are equal, as it were.<sup>65</sup> In other words, it applies to the attainment of overlordship. Coming to the next point, the epithet *bhūtānāmādhipatiḥ* ('overlord of creatures') is applied to a newly consecrated king in *AV.* IV. 8. 1. In the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* *adhipati* ('supreme ruler', Eggeling) is used both with reference to the divine king and his earthly counterpart. Thus while *KS.* VIII. 17 above cited calls Indra *adhipatirjanānām* as well as *adhirāja*, *PB.* XV. 3. 35 states that by using a certain chant one attains *ādhipatyā* ('supreme power', Caland). *Virāt* ('Far-ruler', Eggeling) is used of a sovereign ruler in *RV.* X. 166. 1. The epithet *samrāt* ('All-ruler', Eggeling) is used with reference to the Sun, Agni and other gods in *RV.* III. 55. 7; 56. 5; VIII. 19. 32 etc., while *sāmrajya* is applied to the dominion of Varuṇa in *RV.* I. 25. 10. Similarly the title *svarāt* ('self-ruler', Eggeling) along with other epithets is given to Indra in *RV.* I. 36. 7; 61. 9 etc. Indra is praised successively with the epithets *virāt*, *svarāt* and *samrāt* in *AV.* XVII. 1. 22.

Repeatedly in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* the above titles are sought to be connected with different royal sacrifices. Explaining the significance of the *Vājapeya* sacrifice, *MS.* I. 11. 5,

65 *Indrāyādhirājāyāikādaśakapālāṃ nirvapedyatra rājānah sadṛśā iva syur-Indro vai devānāmādhirājas-tameva bhāgadheyenopāsarat sa enamādhirājyaṃ gamayati.*

KS. XIV. 5. etc. declare that it is a sacrifice for *svārājya*, ('unumschränkte Herrschaft', Caland) and he who performs it attains *svārājya*. Similarly TB. I. 3. 2. 2-3, after stating how Indra by performing *Vājapeya* attained *svārājya* and with it the lordship (*iyaiṣṭhya*) of the gods, concludes that, he who knowing this performs the *Vājapeya* attains *svārājya* and becomes chief of equals. Somewhat inconsistently with the above, KS. XXVIII. 6 and TB. II. 7. 6 declare that while the *Rājasūya* is *varuṇasava* ('consecration to the universal sovereignty of Varuṇa') and *Vājapeya* is *samrātsava* ('consecration to the position of a *samrāt*'), the *Gosava* is the sacrifice for *svārājya*. Slightly different from the above is PB. XIX. 13. 1 and 3 where we read, "The *Vājapeya* is (equal to) the *Rājasūya* and the *Rājasūya* is the consecration to Varuṇa, but the *Gosava* is a sacrifice for *svārājya*, for the *svārājya* is Prajāpati *parameṣṭhī* ('das höchsten Prajāpati', Caland.).<sup>66</sup> On the other hand ŚB. V. 1. 1. 13 declares that one attains to the position of a *samrāt* by performing the *Vājapeya* and that of *rājan* by performance of the *Rājasūya*.<sup>67</sup>

In the above not only are the various titles sometimes sought to be distinguished from one another, but they are even mentioned as belonging to different grades. We thus find *svārājya* in the above-quoted passages being evidently treated as inferior to Varuṇa's universal sovereignty. Again, according to ŚB. XIV. 1. 3. 12 the position of a *samrāt* is higher than that of a *rājan*.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless it is a fact that the precise signification of these titles is left in obscurity.

66 Cf. *Ap.ŚS.* XXII. 12. 17 recommending *gosava* to one desirous of *svārājya* and *Ibid.*, 20 containing the priest's formula:—"I sprinkle thee with the *svārājya* of Prajāpati *parameṣṭhī*." In the above extract from PB. *svārājya* is tr. by Caland as 'supremacy' and *parameṣṭhī* as 'the most exalted Lord.'

67 Similarly *VŚS.* III. 1. 2. 47, concluding its exposition of the *Vājapeya*, says that its performer is called *samrāt*.

68 *Uttaram vai rājyāt sāmraṇyam*. For a fuller exposition of this point see ŚB. V. 1. 1. 13 where we read "The office of a king (*rājan*) is lower and that of an emperor (*samrāt*) is higher; a king might, indeed wish to become emperor, for the



Another set of passages connects, though in a somewhat vague and mystic fashion, the different royal titles with the different cardinal points. This consists of a formula relating to the constitution of the fire-altar, which is common to all *Yajūs Samhitā* schools and gives the appellations of *mahiṣī* (*rājñī* in *KS.* and *MS.*), *virāt*, *samrāt*, *svarāt* and *adhipati* (*adhipatnī* in *KS.* and *MS.*) to the East, South, West, North and the Zenith respectively.<sup>68a</sup> More explicitly *AB.* VIII. 14 describing Indra's consecration connects the central zone of Vedic culture and the regions at its cardinal points with the different royal titles. The passage is as follows:—

“Then the Vasus, the gods in the Eastern quarter, anointed him with six days ... for over-lordship. Therefore in this eastern quarter whatever kings there are of the eastern peoples, they are anointed for overlordship [*sāmrājya*] ... Then in the southern quarter the Rudras, the gods, anointed him with six days ... for paramount rule. Therefore in this southern quarter, whatever kings there are of the Satvants, they are anointed for paramount rule [*bhaujya*]. Then in the western quarter the Ādityas, the gods, anointed him with six days ... for self-rule. Therefore in this western quarter whatever kings there are of the southern and western peoples, they are anointed for self-rule [*svārājya*]. ... Then in the northern quarter the All-gods anointed him with six days ... for sovereignty. Therefore in this northern quarter, the lands of the Uttarakurus and the Uttaramadras, beyond the Himavant, their (kings) are anointed for sovereignty [*vairājya*]. Then in this firm middle established quarter the Sādhyas and the Āptyas, the gods, anointed him

office of king is the lower and that of emperor the higher; but the emperor would not wish to become king, for the office of king is the lower and that of emperor the higher.”

68a See *VS.* XIV. 13. XV. 10-14; *KS.* XVII. 3. *MS.* II. 8. 3.

with six days ... for kingship. Therefore in this firm middle established quarter, whatever kings there are of the Kuru-Pañcālas with the Vaśas and Uśīnaras, they are anointed for kingship [*rājya*].”

This striking passage makes the nearest approach to a regional classification of constitutions that is found in the Vedic literature. But its value is marred by the indefiniteness of the technical titles as well as obscurity of the historical references. If it hints at the fact that monarchic constitutions of the Eastern peoples rose to the dignity of Empires while those of the Kurus, Pañcālas, Vaśas and Uśīnaras attained only the status of ordinary kingships, its evidence is directly belied by the list of great kings who “went round the earth completely, conquering the earth on every side, offering the horse in sacrifice” given in *AB.* VIII. 21-23, and the parallel list of those who performed the horse-sacrifice contained in *SB.* XIII. 5. 4. 2 ff. For these lists comprise a number of names of kings undoubtedly belonging to the Kurus and Pañcālas, such as Janamejaya Pārikṣita, Bharata Dauḥṣanti and Durmukha the Pāñcāla as well as the Pāñcāla kings Kraivya and Soṇa Sātrāsāha. What seems most natural is that the position of the *samrāt* was not confined to the rulers of a particular group of peoples, but was the aspiration, if not the achievement, of all ambitious kings. The great imperial sacrifices, the *Rājasūya* and the *Aśvamedha*, were certainly not the monopoly of the rulers of any particular region.

In the above extract the passage referring to the Uttarakurus and the Uttaramadras is in the original as follows:—

*Ye ke ca pareṇa Himavantam jānapadā Uttarakurava Uttaramadrā iti vairājyāyaiva te'-bhīṣicyante.*

It has been recently suggested<sup>68b</sup> that the term *vairājya* here

68b See K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Part I. pp. 92-4; R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p. 89.

stands for 'a kingless State'. This interpretation with its arguments may be traced back to Martin Haug who translated the above extract as follows:—

"Hence all people living in northern countries beyond the Himalayas such as the Uttarakurus and the Uttaramadras, are inaugurated for living without a king (*vairājyam*) and called *virāj* i.e. without a king."

Commenting on the above, Haug supports his interpretation of *virāj* by saying that here *janapadā*, i.e. the people in opposition to the king, are mentioned as *abhiṣikta* i.e. inaugurated, while in all other passages of this chapter we find instead of them the *rājānaḥ* or kings.<sup>69</sup> We think that a stronger proof is needed for taking *virāj* to mean 'a kingless State' than is supplied by the mere construction of the sentence above quoted. *Virāt* is a well-known title applied to a sovereign ruler not only in the *Brāhmaṇas*—being translated as 'Far-ruler' by Eggeling—, but also, as we have seen, in the *RV.* and the *AV.*

### *The position of the Emperor*

We have seen how terms indicative of paramount rule such as *samrāt* are associated in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, no doubt in accordance with the essentially liturgical character of these works, with the great royal sacrifices. We have now to mention that these same works often attribute to the performer of such sacrifices multiple titles and epithets no doubt constituting in their entirety the priestly authors' idea of the content of the imperial authority. Let us illustrate this point by a few examples. In the *Yajus Samhitā* formulas accompanying the so-called *Devasū* oblations at the *Rājasūya*, the different deities are invoked to quicken the sacri-

69 *The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa of the R̥gveda*, by Martin Haug, Vol. II. p. 518 and *n.*

ficer for various kinds of authority. These last are mentioned as—  
*amitrāya mahate kṣatrāya mahate ādhipatyāya* (T.S. I. 8. 10),  
*asapatnam mahate kṣatrāya mahate jānarājyāya* (MS. II. 6. 6),  
*asapatnam mahate kṣatrāya mahate jyaiṣṭhyāya mahate jāna-*  
*rājyāya* (VS. IX. 40).

In the above *amitrām* (or its equivalent *asapatnam*) stands for freedom from foes, *jyaiṣṭhyam* (or its equivalent *ādhipatyam*) means lordship or overlordship, while *jānarājyam* in our view probably means rule over the whole Folk as distinguished from the single tribe. According to these passages, then, the Vedic Emperor is invested not only with supreme and undisputed authority, but he also enjoys the rule over a complex of tribes (or peoples). The largest number of such epithets and titles is reserved in the *AB.* for the royal sacrificer performing the ceremonies of consecration. We begin with a passage (*AB.* VII. 31-32) which, while justifying the proper food of the king (the fruits of the *Nyagrodha*, *Udumbara*, *Aśvattha* and *Plakṣa* trees) at the sacrifice, states that thereby the priest places in the *kṣatriya* (or the king) successively the *kṣatra*, the *bhaujya*, the *sāmrājya*, the *svārājya* and the *vairājya* (tr. by Keith as 'lordly power', 'pre-eminence', 'overlordship', 'self-rule' and 'control' respectively) of the trees concerned. This evidently involves a metaphorical, not to say mystical, application of various forms of authority to the king. Passing to the consecration ceremonies called the *Punarabhiṣeka* ('Renewed Consecration') and the *Mahābhiṣeka* ('Great Consecration') of Indra, the *AB.* attributes the above and other kinds of authority to the performer of the sacrifice. In the first-named ceremony the king mounts the throne according to the formula (VIII 6) for *rājya*, *sāmrājya*, *bhaujya*, *svārājya*, *vairājya*, *pārameṣṭhya*, *rājya* (a second time), *māhārājya*, *ādhipatyā*, *svāvāsya* and *atiṣṭhā* ('kingship', 'overlordship', 'paramount rule', 'self-rule', 'sovereignty', 'supreme authority', 'kingship', 'great kingship' 'suzerainty', 'supre-

macy', 'pre-eminence', Keith). Similarly in the formula for the king's consecration (*AB. VIII. 7*) he desires to become *rājādhirāja* ('overlord among kings') and is characterised as *māhān māhīnām samrāt carṣaṇīnām* ('great, of the great people the ruler', Keith). The same formula declares that the king is consecrated 'for might, for prosperity, for glory, for the eating of food'.

Introducing the second ceremony in its application to the human king, *AB. VIII. 15* says that its object is to win for the sacrificer *śraīṣṭhya*, *atiṣṭhā* and *paramatā* ('superiority', 'pre-eminence' and 'supremacy') over all kings, to make him 'all-encompassing' 'possessed of all the earth', 'possessed of all life from one end up to the further side of the earth bounded by the ocean', 'sole ruler'. Again, according to the formula (*AB. VIII. 17*) the earthly king mounts the throne for *sāmṛājya*, *bhaujya*, *svārājya*, *vairājya*, *rājya*, *pārameṣṭhya*, *māhārājya*, *ādhīpatya*, *svāvaśya* and *atiṣṭhā*. Similar but not identical epithets are applied to the king in the proclamation formula uttered by the 'king-makers' immediately after the above ceremony. In the same context we read how in the case of the human king (as in that of Indra) the different deities consecrated the sacrificer for different authorities in different directions—the Vasus in the eastern quarter for *sāmṛājya*, the Rudras in the southern quarter for *bhaujya*, the Ādityas in the western quarter for *svārājya*, the All-gods in the northern quarter for *rājya*, the Maruts and Āngirasas in the upward quarter for *pārameṣṭhya* and the Sādhyas and Āptyas in 'this firm middle established quarter' for *rājya*. With this last extract we may compare *JB. III. 152*<sup>70</sup> describing the creation of Varuṇa's divine kingship. There we read how Varuṇa, originally the equal of the other gods, desired to be consecrated for *rājya* over them. After he had learnt the proper chant from Prajāpati, the gods put down for

70 This corresponds to Caland, *Das Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl* No. 188.

him the king's seat. Then the Vasus consecrated him to *rājya*, the Rudras to *vairājya*, the Ādityas to *svārājya*, the All-gods to *sām-rājya*, the Maruts to *sārvavaśya* and lastly the Sādhyas and the Āptyas to *pārameṣṭhya*.<sup>70a</sup>

In the passages we have quoted above, the position of the Emperor is evidently conceived to be the sum total of all forms of authority known at that time. Among these vague generalities are included over-lordship of kings, sole rulership and territorial sovereignty up to the known natural frontiers. In these we have an anticipation of the three types of Empire known to historical times.

The position of the Emperor is conceived from a somewhat different angle in another *Brāhmaṇa* work describing another great 'kingly sacrifice', the *Aśvamedha*. Explaining a formula uttered at the ceremony of putting the halter on the sacrificial horse, *ŚB.* XIII. 1. 2. 1 states that the performer of the *Aśvamedha* thereby conquers all the quarters (*sarvā diśo'bbijayati*) and that the priest thus makes him a ruler and upholder (*yantāramevainaṃ dhartāraṃ karoti*). In connection with the recital of the so-called 'revolving legend' (*pāriplavamākhyānam*) *ŚB.* XIII. 4. 3. 15 says:—

'Verily for whomsoever the Hotṛ, knowing this, tells this revolving legend or whosoever even knows this, attains to fellowship and communion [*sāyujyaṃ salokatām*] with these royalties [*rājyāni*], gains the sovereign rule and lordship [*aśvāryamādhipatyam*] over all people, secures for himself all the Vedas and by gratifying the gods, finally establishes himself on all beings'. According to the above passages, universal authority of various kinds is the characteristic mark of the position attained by the imperial performer of the sacrifice.

<sup>70a</sup> Caland (*Das Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl*, p. 260) renders the above series of technical titles as 'Herrschaft', 'weiten Herrschaft', 'unbeschränkten Herrschaft', 'Allherrschaft', 'Allgewalt', and 'oberherrschaft' respectively.



Admitting the conception of Empire in our present sources to have been as above described, it remains to consider whether and if so, how far it was realized in practice. No doubt, as we have just seen, our works contain lists of great kings who are said to have gone round the earth completely, conquering on every side. But of anything like a line of Emperors reigning over long periods of time we have hardly any trace. Probably the Empires were essentially of the nature of overlords which came with individual ambitious and powerful kings and did not long outlive them. The Vedic Empire, like the Vedic kingship, was far from acquiring that stamp of permanence which could only arise from a strong administrative machinery and stable relations between the subject and the sovereign or between the dependants and their overlord.

*Limitations of the later Vedic kingship.*

Let us next consider the nature and extent of the limitations to which the king's authority appears to have been subject in the Late Vedic period. We may begin by observing that kingship at this period, as in the earlier Vedic times, evidently rested on an insecure basis. To this phenomenon a direct testimony is borne by a remarkable passage of *KB.* (XVI. 4) contrasting the stability of the *viś* with the instability of the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya.<sup>70b</sup> Indirect evidence of the instability of the king's position is furnished by a series of rites recalling a well-known group of *AV.* charms referred to above, namely those for the restoration of kings who have been, or are about to be expelled. Such is the offering to Indra quoted in *KS.* X. 8 and 9.<sup>71</sup> Such also are the rites enjoined in *TS.* II. 1. 4. 7 and

<sup>70b</sup> The passage answers, in the usual form of dogmatic exposition of the sacrificial ritual, the question, 'Why are the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas unstable, the *viś* stable?'

<sup>71</sup> *Indrāyārkavata ekādaśakapālaṃ nirvāpēdāparuddho'vagamakāmo'ntaṃ vā eṣa*

II. 3. 1 to be performed respectively by one who is living in exile and one who has been, or is being expelled. Coming to the *Brāhmanas*, we have in *AB. VIII. 10* a rite for one who, being expelled from his kingdom, desires his priest to act so that he may be restored to the same. Concrete instances of kings who were expelled from their thrones but were afterwards restored through performance of the appropriate rites are also found in the *Brāhmanas*.<sup>72</sup> The late *Kauśika-sūtra* of the *AV.* gives (*XVI. 27-33*) a series of magical rites accompanying the utterance of appropriate *AV.* hymns, for restoring an exiled king to his kingdom.<sup>73</sup>

Next to the rites for the restoration of expelled kings may be mentioned those intended for their protection against pretenders. *TS. II. 1. 3. 4* and *5* prescribes two rites for one who, being meet for kingship, obtains not a kingdom—an undoubted reference to the usurpation of kingship by rivals to the exclusion of the rightful heir. Similarly *PB. XIX. 1* lays down a rite for one who hoping for a kingdom does not obtain it.<sup>74</sup> Rites are also mentioned as in *TS. II. 2. 7. 4*, for one whom his enemies menace or whose realm is invaded by his enemies.

It will appear from the above extracts that the king's office had not sufficient legal or constitutional warrant to be placed on a secure footing. Other passages would seem to indicate that even his status in relation to his subjects was, as before, far from being fixed and immutable. We have seen how the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāh-gacchati yamaparundhanti ... Indrāya sūtrāmṇa ekādaśakapālaṃ nirvapedaparuddho vāparurutsyamānau*.

72 Cf. *SB. XII. 4. 3. 1 ff.*; *JB. II. 15. 1-7*, etc.

73 Text in Bloomfield's ed. p. 44; tr. by Caland, *Altindische Zauberritual*, pp. 37-38; summary in Victor Henry, *La Magie* etc. pp. 148-149. The commentator Keśava introduces these texts with the words "*athāvaśyam rāṣṭrapraveśakarmavidhim vaksyāmaḥ/svarāstre (!) yo niṣkrāntaḥ śatruṇā punaḥ praveśamicchati tasyedaṃ karma*". (Quoted by Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 317).

74 *Yo rājya āśamsamāno rājyaṃ na prāpnuyāt sa etena yajeta*. Cf. *PB. II. 10. 4*.

*manas*, while in general advocating the superiority of the Brāhmaṇa to the Kṣatriya, occasionally admit their equivalence or even the Brāhmaṇa's relative inferiority.<sup>75</sup> Turning to the relationship between king and people, we find our present authorities repeatedly claiming that the priest by appropriate manipulation of the sacrificial ritual is capable of weakening or even destroying the king by the *viś* and *vice versa*. To take a few examples, *KS.* XXI 10 and *MS.* III. 3. 10 mention rites by which the priest can at his will slay the *kṣatra* by the *viś* and *vice versa*. Similarly *MS.* IV. 6. 8 refers to rites by which the priest can at his will make the *viś* strong and the *kṣatra* weak and *vice versa*. The Brāhmaṇas follow in the same strain. *AB.* III. 19 mentions formulae for enabling the sacrificer by witchcraft to smite the *kṣatra* with the *viś* and *vice versa*. So also *AB.* II. 33 contemplates the priest at the *soma* sacrifice reciting a formula in such a way as to deprive a sacrificer of the *kṣatra* and the *viś*. Of the same nature is *PB.* VI. 6. 2-3 stating how by manipulation of a certain rite and utterance of the corresponding formulas, the priest at his will separates the royal sacrificer from the *viś* and from food, or else puts him over both. In the same context (*Ibid.* 5) we are introduced to another rite whereby the priest, if he so desires, slays the *kṣatra* by the *viś*.

We have thus far described the weakness of the king's position arising from the imperfect organisation of the Vedic Society and State. We may now refer to the moral checks that probably acted on the king's authority. Such were the conceptions of divine law (*dhāman*) and ancient custom (*dharmā*) dating from the *Rgvedic* times, of which we have survivals in our present authorities.<sup>76</sup> A remarkable development of the concept of *Dharma* ('sacred law')

<sup>75</sup> Above, pp. 76-9.

<sup>76</sup> For *dhāman*, (Law) cf. *VS.* IV. 34; *TĀ.* II. 7. 2. etc.; for *Dharma*, cf. *VS.* X. 29; XV. 6; XX. 9; XXX 6 etc.

occurs in the late *BU.* I. 4. 11. 14 concluding its account of the creation of the four castes. There we read:—

“He [the Brahman] was not strong enough. He created still further the most excellent Law [*dharmā*]. Law is the *ksatra* of the *ksatra*, therefore there is nothing higher than the Law. Thenceforth even a weak man rules a stronger with the help of the Law as with the help of a king. Thus the Law is called the True. And if a man declares what is true, they say he declares the Law, and if he declares the Law, they say he declares what is true. Thus both are the same.”

In the above important extract, it will be observed, the concept of *Dharma* is brought into relation with cosmic creation. Not only is it traced to the Creator Himself, but it is expressly declared to be the most potent of all powers and identified with the Truth.<sup>77</sup> We may take the above passage, then, to involve the earliest statement of the doctrine of sovereignty of the Sacred Law, which is a commonplace in the later *Smṛti* literature.

We now come to the question of constitutional limitations of the king's authority in the Late Vedic State. From an analysis of the different constituent ceremonies of the *Rājasūya* and the *Vājapeya* as described and explained in the *Yajus Samhitā* and the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, K. P. Jayaswal<sup>78</sup> concludes that they involve the idea of investiture of a private citizen with royalty, that of a coronation-oath between the newly elected king and his subjects, and finally, that of kingship being regarded as a trust. It has been shown elsewhere<sup>79</sup> that the first two statements have no basis in fact, while the third has only

<sup>77</sup> The assimilation of *dharmā* and *satya* is also indicated in *BU.* II. 5. 1 ff. where they are included in a regular series as the honey of all beings and all beings are mentioned as the honey of these qualities.

<sup>78</sup> *Hindu Polity*, Part II, pp. 15, 27-28, 34.

<sup>79</sup> See *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography* etc. pp. 248-49, 273-74, 281-82, 286-87.

a limited application. A more general criticism of Jayaswal's position is that the texts concerned refer to acts of sacrificial routine, not (as far as we are aware) to the actual working of the State constitution. Nevertheless in so far as the conception of kingship as a trust had a practical application, it undoubtedly involved a constitutional principle of great potentiality for controlling the royal authority. The same remark applies to the notion surviving (as we have seen) down to this period, viz. that kingship is a human institution. A more concrete check, it may be thought, lay in the influence of the Brāhmaṇas who, as shown above, were generally, though not universally, regarded as superior to the Kṣatriyas. Of the same nature, it may be supposed, was the influence of the *purohita*, who was virtually conceived, according to the texts to be quoted later, as the *alter ego* of the king. But the extent to which this general influence could be translated into practice as a constitutional restraint, probably depended more upon personalities than upon established law and usage. To judge only from an *Upaniṣad* story<sup>80</sup> to be quoted below, viz. that relating to King Janaka's somewhat quixotic offer of his subjects along with himself as slaves to the sage Yājñavalkya, it would seem that the popular voice sometimes was of negligible constitutional importance. But the story is written so evidently for purpose of edification that it would be extremely unsafe to press its constitutional significance. That the people still possessed the constitutional privilege of giving consent to the king's distribution of public lands appears from a remarkable *Brāhmaṇa* passage cited above, which however suggests that the king sometimes disposed of the lands by his own arbitrary will.<sup>81</sup> Finally, it appears to us that the rites for acquiring the

80 BU. IV. 4. 23.

81 The passage (SB. VIII. 1. 7. 3. 4) is as follows:—"To whomsoever the kṣatriya with the approval of the viś ('people' or 'clan') grants a settlement, that is properly given." For the interpretation of this passage, see *The Agrarian System in Ancient India*, p. 83.

gift of speech as well as those for gaining influence among men, to which our records abundantly testify and which we propose fully to notice below, illustrate the continued influence of *vox populi* in the general administration of public affairs.

### *Summary.*

Kingship in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* indicates the same broad characteristics as in the *RV.* and the *AV.*, but with some notable developments. The ritual texts in general contemplate the monarchy as being still in the tribal stage, but there are other texts which take us to the higher stage of territorial monarchy. As in early times, the king enjoyed the position of high dignity, prosperity and authority. In some quarters the king's rule was sought to be based with intenser emphasis than before upon Divine Right and even upon his quasi-divinity. And yet there remains the fundamental fact that his origin is distinctly traced even at the most solemn ceremony of the *Rājasūya* to a human source. A new attribute predicated of the king in these later works is that of moral pre-eminence which he shares, according to the ideas of the priestly authors, with the learned *Brāhmaṇa*. On the other hand the king's alleged claim of ownership of the soil is not supported by facts. Only in a late Vedic passage describing a certain type of royal coronation, we have a purely symbolical ceremony involving the acquisition (followed by immediate return) of the subjects' possessions by the king. The king seems to have exercised a greater measure of executive and judicial authority than before, besides his usual supreme command in war. In particular we find some texts suggesting not only that the king's Justice prevailed over private jurisdictions, but also that the king, no doubt as the Fountain of Justice, was exempt from punishment. To these functions our present authorities add the king's guardianship of *Dharma* ('sacred law') along



with that of the Brāhmaṇas—a sure index of the increased importance of the king's executive functions. Indicative of the wide prevalence of the monarchic constitution is the fact that the king is declared in some texts to be the wielder of *kṣatra* (ruling authority), while the growing rigidity of class restrictions leads in other texts to the identification of the *kṣatra* with the Rājanya. The ruling power, as compared with the subjects, has, according to some texts, the advantage of being single, definite and active. In general the relation of the *viś* to the *kṣatra* is regarded as that of political dependence, but we are sometimes reminded that the *viś* is the source of the *kṣatra*. The two dominant forces in the late Vedic State and society are the spiritual and the temporal powers, between which, however, there is a fundamental difference, not to say, antagonism of attributes and functions. In general it is held that the spiritual power dominates the temporal, although sometimes we are told, evidently as a concession to reality, that the temporal power is equivalent, or even superior to the spiritual. Coming to the types of constitutions, we have concrete evidence of the general prevalence of hereditary monarchy as well as of the survival of dynastic governments during the present period, but of elective monarchy there is hardly any trace. In the latest Vedic period the hereditary principle is sufficiently established to make succession by primogeniture the normal rule. Royalty during the present period is known by a variety of undefined titles, of which that of *samrāt* is recognised as superior to that of *rājan*. A rough regional classification associates some of these titles severally with "this middle established quarter" (the kernel of the later Vedic civilization) and the tracts surrounding it at the cardinal points. Overlordship, known in a vague fashion from *Rgvedic* times, was credited at this period with the possession of certain attributes, not all of which are capable of precise definition. We may, however, take them as anticipating the three types of imperial authority known to

historical times, namely paramount sovereignty, sole rulership and territorial rule up to the natural frontiers. But whatever development the kingship might have attained as compared with the earlier times, it was far from being consolidated into a strong centralised despotism. Owing, as it seems, to the imperfect organization of the State and society, not only was the king's office unstable, but even his status in relation to his subjects was not permanently fixed. Checks of a moral character were imposed upon royalty by the surviving conceptions of Divine Law and Custom and at a later stage by the doctrine of the sovereignty of *dharma* regarded as deriving its origin from the Creator Himself. In the view of kingship as a human institution and more especially as a trust, to which our records bear witness, were embodied constitutional principles of high potentialities for checking the king's authority. Finally we have to allow for the probable exercise of high constitutional privileges by the class of Brāhmaṇas (in particular the *Purohita*) as well as the people. They perhaps exercised constitutional restraint upon the king's authority in degrees varying according to the relative characters and capacities of the persons concerned.

### *The royal family.*

We may pause here to discuss the constitutional status of the members of the king's family, such as the Chief Queen, the king's son and brother. In the course of their description of the *Rājasūya* all our relevant sources agree in including the *mahiṣī* (Chief Queen) in the list of *ratnins*<sup>82</sup> participating in the ceremony of the *Ratna-havīṃsi*. In *TS.* I. 8. 9. 1 ff; *MS.* II. 6. 5; IV. 3. 8; *KS.* XV, 4 and *TB.* I. 7. 3 she comes after the Brahman (priest) and the Rājanya and is followed by Queens of lesser rank. On the other hand *SB.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ratnins*, translated as 'possessed of the Jewel (offering)' (Eggeling in *SBE*, vol. XLI, p. 58 n. 2), as Kleinodträger (Caland in tr. of *Ap.ŚS.*, pt. III., p. 131).

V. 3. 1. 1 ff. mentions her after the *senāni* and the *purohita*. The significance of the *ratnabhaviṃsi* can be understood from the fact that the *ratnins* are called 'limbs of *ksatra*' (*MS.* IV. 3. 8) and the 'givers' as well as 'takers' of the kingdom (*TB.* I. 7. 3. 1), while *ŚB.* V. 3. 1. 1-12 declares that each *ratnin* is thereby made the king's faithful follower. Referring specially to the Chief Queen and other queens, *MS.* IV. 3. 8 states that the priest by making the offerings at the houses of the *mahiṣi* and the *parivṛktī* ('neglected wife') makes them an object of subsistence among the subjects. It would therefore follow that the Chief Queen with or without other queens occupied a distinct, though undefined, constitutional status in the Late Vedic State.<sup>83</sup>

While the king's son and brother are, strangely enough, omitted in 'the Jewel-offering ceremony' just mentioned, they are remembered in other parts of the *Rājasūya* ritual. After the besprinkling ceremony, the king, according to the White Yajus ritual (*ŚB.* V. 4. 2. 8) is made to hand over the Brāhmaṇa's vessel to his dearest son, thinking 'May this son of mine perpetuate this vigour of mine'. Again, at the ceremony of the king's playing the game of dice at the *Rājasūya*, the sacrificial sword (according to the White Yajus ritual) is passed round successively from the *adhvaryu* (or *purohita*) to the king, the king's brother and others, while (according to Black Yajus texts) it is passed round in succession from the Brahman priest to the king, his dear son and friend and so on. Explaining the significance of this ceremony, *ŚB.* V. 4. 4. 15-19 states that the person passing round the sacrificial sword makes the one to whom it is passed in each case weaker than himself. It will appear from the above that so far as we can judge from the sacrificial routine, the king's son and brother, like the Chief Queen and other Queens, held a position of

83 Cf. *The Beginnings of Indian Historiography* etc., pp. 250-53. For criticism of the different view of K. P. Jayaswal, see *ibid.*

high constitutional significance. Independent confirmation of this fact is provided by *PB. XIX. 1. 4* giving a list of eight *vīras* ('persons of distinction'), 'who together sustain the kingship'. In this list are included along with others, the king's brother, the king's son and the Chief Queen.<sup>84</sup>

*The king's administration.*

The administration of the Late Vedic State runs on the same lines as that of the earlier times, but indicates some remarkable developments. There are good reasons to believe, as we shall see later,<sup>85</sup> that the *sabhā* of this period functioned as the king's court as well as his Privy Council. As regards finance, the *Rgvedic* and *Atharva-vedic bali* has now assumed the character of a regular tax paid by the subjects to the king. Thus *SB. XI. 2. 6. 14* has the simile of an inferior (*pāpīyān*) bringing *bali* to his superior (*śreyas*) and that of a *vaiśya* bringing *bali* to the king. This habitual relation of the king to his subjects is nowhere better expressed than in the epithet 'devourer of his people' (*viśāmatā*) applied to the king, as we have seen, in some *Brāhmaṇa* texts.<sup>86</sup> The high importance of *bali* is also proved by the fact that the *Brāhmaṇas* have a special set of rites for ensuring its payment to the king by his subjects. Thus a passage in *AB. VIII. 34* explaining a consecration rite states that he thereby obtains tribute (*bali*) from all quarters. Similarly *TB. II. 7. 18. 1-2* mentions a rite called *vighana* ('destroyer of obstacles') by performing which Indra formerly overcame the hostility of the Maruts who were his subjects. If the *kṣatriya* or the king, we are told, performs this rite, he is relieved from all hostilities in the sense that his subjects bring *bali* to him.<sup>87</sup>

84 For a fuller discussion of this point, see *The Beginnings* etc., pp. 271-72.

85 See below *s.v.* 'The Councils and Assemblies.'

86 Above, p. 60.

87 For another reference, see *SB. I. 3. 2. 15* to be discussed below.

Other aspects of the king's administration dealt with by our present authorities may conveniently be considered in connection with their mention of the classes of royal officers dating mostly from the older times. This mention is chiefly made, characteristically enough, in the context of participation of the officers concerned (or their representatives or relations) in the great 'kingly sacrifices', the *Āśvamedha* and the *Rājasūya*.<sup>88</sup> Thus ŚB. XIII. 4. 2. 5 gives us a list of keepers of the sacrificial horse at the *Āśvamedha*. This consists of 100 *rājaputras* ('Princes') clad in armour, 100 *rājanyas* ('nobles') armed with swords, 100 sons of *sūtas* and *grāmanīs* bearing quivers filled with arrows and 100 sons of *kṣātras* and *saṃgrahīṭṛs* bearing staves. It is evident from the order of their enumeration as also from their equipment that the groups are arranged in the sequence of their social rank. Thus while the *rājaputras* and *rājanyas* would form the first and second order of nobles, the *sūtas* and the *grāmanīs* would be officials of the first grade and the *kṣātras* and *saṃgrahīṭṛs* those of the second class. The same order is preserved in ŚB. XIII. 5. 2. 5-8 where in connection with another *Āśvamedha* rite the attendants of the *mahiṣī* (Chief Queen) are said to consist of 100 *rājaputrīs* ('daughters of kings', Eggeling, or perhaps 'daughters of Princes'), those of the *vāvāta* ('favourite wife') consist of 100 *rājanyās* ('noble women'), those of the *parivṛktā* ('discarded wife') comprise 100 daughters of *sūtas* and *grāmanīs* and those of the *pālāgalī* ('the fourth wife') consist of 100 daughters of *kṣātras* and *saṃgrahīṭṛs*. In the late *Vādhula Sūtras* we have a similar association of the royal officers with princes

88 It deserves to be remarked that the *Āśvamedha* and the *Rājasūya* are mentioned by name in RV. I. 162-63, AV. XI. 8. 7. According to Oldenberg (*Das Religion des Veda*, pp. 473 ff.) the horse-sacrifice to the dead mentioned in RV. X. 56 may be an imitation or prototype of the usual *Āśvamedha*. It is possible that the association of officials with these sacrifices may go back likewise to the RV. and AV. times.

and nobles at the *Aśvamedha*. In Sūtra No. 79 we are told how the keepers of the sacrificial horse consist of 300 *sūtas* and *grāmaṇīs* as well as 300 *ṣṣattṛs* and *saṃgrahītṛs* along with 300 *rājaputras*, 300 *arājans* ('non-kings') and other groups of 300 each. Similarly Sūtra no. 87 tells us how the *mahiṣī* is attended by 100 *rājaputris* and the *parivṛktī* by the wives of *ṣṣattṛs* and *saṃgrahītṛs* as well as those of 'kārīmāgadhas'. In Sūtra No. 90 we read that the *mahiṣī* is attended by 100 *rājaputris*, the *vāvāta* by 100 wives of *arājans*, the *parivṛktī* by 100 wives of *ṣṣattṛ*, *saṃgrahītṛs* and *kārīmāgadhas*. More generally, Sūtra no. 92 associates with the *Aśvamedha*, the *rājan*, the *rājaputras*, the *arājan*, the *sūtas* and *grāmaṇīs*, the *ṣṣattṛs* and *saṃgrahītṛs*.<sup>89</sup> A comparison of the lists in the *Vādhula Sūtras* with those in the *ŚB*. above cited discloses certain important differences. Nevertheless the fact remains that in the earlier as in the later texts, officialdom is regarded as sufficiently important to be connected with princes and nobles at the great ceremony of the horse-sacrifice.

Of greater significance than the above is the fact that some of the officers above-mentioned, viz. the *sūta*, the *grāmaṇī*, the *ṣṣattṛ* and the *saṃgrahītṛ* along with the *senānī* are included by our present authorities in the list of *ratnins* referred to above, at whose houses the king has to make the offering of the *ratnahavimsi* at the *Rājasūya*. We shall discuss elsewhere the constitutional significance of the reference to individual officers in the above list. Here it will be sufficient to repeat that as in the case of the Chief Queen, the inclusion of the officials above-named in the *ratnin* list is an index of their high constitutional status in the Late Vedic Polity.<sup>90</sup>

Of the officials above-mentioned the *senānī* ('commander-in-

89 See W. Caland, *Eine dritte Mitteilung über das Vādhulasūtra* in *Acta Orientalia*, Vol. IV. (1926) pp. 186-199. On *Kārīmāgadhas*, see below.

90 The *sūta*, *grāmaṇī*, *ṣṣattṛ* and *saṃgrahītṛ* are also comprised in the list of eight *vīras*, for whose constitutional significance see above, p. 100.



chief') is obviously the head of the military administration.<sup>91</sup> The intimate connection of the *senānī* with the army is reflected, e.g., in the *śatarudrīya* litany of the *Yajurveda*,<sup>92</sup> where we find among the epithets of God Rudra, the *senānī*, the *senās* and the *senānis*. Other texts jointly associate the *senānī* and the *grāmaṇī* with fighting from chariots and with command of the army. Thus in course of the mystic explanation of the so-called five-crested bricks at the preparation of the fire-altar, which is common to all the *Yajus Samhitā* schools,<sup>93</sup> the *senānī* and the *grāmaṇī* (in the singular or plural) of the five specified bricks are called *rathagṛtsaḥ* (or *rathakṛtsnaḥ* or *rathakṛtsaḥ*) and *rathaujas* ('skilled with chariot' and 'mighty in chariot'), *rathasvanah* and *rathbecitraḥ* ('chariot-rattling' and 'glittering on the car'), *rathaprotah* (or *rathaprotah*) and *asamarathah* ('chariot-seated' and 'peerless-charioted'), *tārksya* and *arīṣṭanemi* ('whose fellows are uninjured'), *senajit* and *suseṇah* ('army-conqueror' and 'well armed'). The position of the *senānī* as second in military command after the king is indicated in the legend of *ŚB.* II. 6. 4. 2-4 stating how the gods won supreme authority (*vijiti*) after choosing Agni, Varuṇa and Indra successively as their *rājan* (king) and *anika* (equivalent to a *senānī*). In regard to the *senānī*'s status, it is interesting to observe that with the single exception of *ŚB.* which places him at the head of the *ratnin* list, all other authorities agree in assigning him a position below the Brahman, the Rājanya and the Chief Queen (or Queens). With this agrees the omission, strange as it may seem, of the *senānī* from the list of eight *vīras* who, according to a *PB.* text<sup>93a</sup> quoted above, sustain the kingdom and also from the group of

91 A variant form *senāpati* is found in the story of Atyarāti Jānaṃtapi and his priest in *AB.* VIII. 23.

92 See *VS.* XVI. 17; *KS.* XVII. 12; *MS.* II. 9. 3; *TS.* IV. 5. 2. 1; *Kap. S.* XXVII. 3.

93 *VS.* XV. 15-19; *TS.* IV. 4. 3; *KS.* XVII. 9; *MS.* II. 8. 10; *Kap. S.* XXVI. 8,

93a XIX. 1. 4.

persons to whom the sacrificial sword is passed round successively at a certain ceremony of the *Rājasūya*. These facts would seem to show that in the eyes of the priestly authors the military branch of the administration was less important than the civil. The Vedic State, according to this view, was the reverse of a *Krieg-staat*.

A remarkable reference in the *śatarudrīya* litany of the *Yajus Samhitās* just mentioned acquaints us with some offices of the military administration evidently subordinate to that of the *senānī*. Among the epithets applied to the God Rudra in these texts we find *pattinām patih* ('lord of footmen'), *satvānām patih* ('lord of warriors'), *vrātas* and *vrātapatis*, *gaṇas* and *gaṇapatis*. While these terms are not capable of precise explanation, the epithet *pattinām patih* suggests that the infantry was already organised under a separate command. Commands of small bodies of troops are probably indicated by the terms *vrātapati* and *gaṇapati*, though their exact significance is unknown. These references to the organization of the army on a purely military basis are significant of the change from the tribal to the territorial State characteristic of our present period.

The class of *sūtas* ('court minstrels' or 'heralds') and *grāmaṇīs* ('village headmen') occupies much the same social and political status as in *AV.* times. We have elsewhere suggested that *AV.* III. 5. 7, by mentioning *sūtas* and *grāmaṇīs* side by side with *rājāno rājakṛtaḥ*, implies that the former belonged to the class of *arājāno rājakṛtaḥ* ('king-makers' ranking below the *rājans*, i.e. princes and nobles). Now the texts from the *ŚB.* and the *Vādhula Sūtras* quoted above definitely contemplate, as we have seen, the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs* as ranking after the *rājaputras* (princes) and *rājanyas* (nobles). What is more, two texts of *ŚB.*<sup>94</sup> actually apply to the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs*

94 *ŚB.* III. 4. 1. 7 and XIII. 2. 2. 18 of which the first gives the simile of *sūtas* and *grāmaṇīs* attending upon the king and the second has the simile of their inferior relation to the king.

the epithet *arājāno rājakṛtaḥ* in opposition to the *rājan* (tr. as 'king' by Eggeling, but perhaps standing for 'noble' generally). In particular we have in our present sources clear indications of the fact that the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs* were the most distinguished representatives of the class of *Vaiśyas*. Thus *MS.* IV. 3. 8, justifying the offering of the *ratna-havis* at the house of the *sūta*, says that the *viś* (people) wait upon the *Kṣatriya* with the *sūta* as their mouth-piece.<sup>95</sup> As for the *grāmaṇī*, *MS.* II. 6. 5 in its list of *ratnins* significantly applies to him the epithet 'vaiśya,' while *ŚB.* V. 3. 1. 6 justifying the 'jewel-offering' to the *Maruts* at the house of the *grāmaṇī* says that the *Maruts* are the *viśas* and the *grāmaṇī* is a *vaiśya*.<sup>96</sup> How much the *grāmaṇī*'s office was held to mark the climax of a *vaiśya*'s career is proved by such passages as *MS.* I. 6. 5 stating that the *vaiśya* becomes prosperous through the office of the *grāmaṇī*<sup>97</sup> and *TS.* II. 5. 4. 4 recognizing the learned *Brāhmaṇa*, the *rājanya* and the *grāmaṇī* (an indirect testimony to the *vaiśya* caste of the last-named) as types of prosperity.<sup>98</sup> *ŚB.* VIII. 6. 2. 1 indeed goes so far as to compare the position of the *grāmaṇī* (*grāmaṇīya*) with that of the king.<sup>99</sup> After this it is no wonder that the individual *sūta* and *grāmaṇī* figure not only in the list of *ratnins*, but also in that of eight *vīras* referred to above.

When we proceed to examine the precise functions of the *sūta* and the *grāmaṇī*, we find ourselves confronted with an almost com-

95 *Sūtamukhā vai viṣ kṣatramupatiṣṭhate.*

96 *viśo vai maruto vaiśyo vai grāmaṇib.* The *Vaiśya* caste is indirectly suggested by *TB.* I. 4. 8 connecting a certain *mantra* for a *vaiśya* with *grāmaṇī* *Manu*, while those for a *Brāhmaṇa*, a *rājan*, a *rājanya* and a *rathakāra* are connected with other specified deities.

97 *Grāmaṇīthyena khalu vai vaiśyo bhadro bhavati.*

98 *trayo vai gataśriyaḥ śūśruvān grāmaṇī rājanyaḥ.*

99 The passage is thus translated by Eggeling:—"Whence people here say even to this day, 'This one is not equal to sustain distinction, either in regard to kingship or the position of a *grāmaṇī*.'"

plete lack of data. In the *SB.* passages quoted above, the title *rājakerṭab* ('king-makers') is applied to both these classes, but of the constitutional authority implied by this term we have no indication. We know only from *AB.* VIII. 12 and 17 that the 'king-makers' (here called *rājakerṭtārāḥ*) had the function of proclaiming the newly consecrated king at the ceremony of Great Consecration of Indra. We may perhaps explain the title by saying that the *sūtas* and *grāmanīs* along with the princes and nobles were still credited, as in *AV.* times, with controlling the choice of kings.

Coming to the individual offices, we find that the *sūta*'s office was sufficiently important to deserve a special sacrifice for its aspirant.<sup>100</sup> The *sūta*, again, enjoyed the distinction of having his person regarded as sacred, as we learn from the significant epithets applied to him in the *Śatarudrīya* litany of the Yajurveda.<sup>101</sup> This privilege may have been connected with the *sūta*'s above-mentioned function of representing the people in their relations with the king. On the whole it is probable that the *sūtas*, who were originally mere officers of the royal household, had by this time acquired some kind of executive authority.

Turning to the *grāmanī*'s functions, we have a probable reference to his executive authority in the fact that a *grāmanī*, an astrologer and a watchman are significantly dedicated to 'might' in the list of symbolical victims at the *Puruṣamedha*.<sup>102</sup> From the reference to the *grāmanī* in a *KS.* passage, it appears that the king and the *grāmanī*, apparently representing the central and local authority res-

<sup>100</sup> Cf. *BSS.* XVIII. 3 ff.

<sup>101</sup> Among the persons and objects identified with the god Rudra in this text is mentioned *sūta abantiya* (*TS.* IV. 5. 2. 1), *sūta abanti* (*VS.* XVI 18), *sūta abantva* (*MS.* II. 9. 3; *KS.* XVII. 12). In the above *abantiya* is translated by Keith as 'the inviolate', *abantva* is taken in *VI. s.v. sūta*, as equivalent to *abanya* 'not to be slain', while *abanti* (*VI. loc. cit.*) is taken to mean non-fighter.

<sup>102</sup> *VS.* XXX. 30 etc.

pectively, were entrusted with the duty of protecting the crops.<sup>103</sup> To this we have to add that the *grāmaṇi* and the *senāni* are jointly associated with fighting from chariots and with command of troops in the *Yajus Samhitā* texts quoted above. Probably the *grāmaṇi* who was originally a troop-leader, had by this time become the head of the village administration, both for civil and military purposes.<sup>104</sup> Another function of the *grāmaṇi* probably of a convivial nature is indicated by the fact that among the symbolical victims at the *Puruṣamedha*,<sup>105</sup> the *grāmaṇi* is dedicated to *nṛtta* (dancing).

Admitting that the *grāmaṇi* stood for the head of the village administration, we may mention that the nature of his office is still an open question. It has, for instance, been doubted whether he was an elected or a hereditary officer or was nominated by the king.<sup>106</sup> In some cases, at any rate, it appears certain that the *grāmaṇi* was the head of the clansmen settled in the village. For *TB. II. 7. 18. 5.* tells us that the *grāmaṇi* lives in close relationship with his *sajātas* (clansmen).<sup>107</sup>

While on the subject of village administration, we may refer to another officer known to us only from three *Yajus Samhitā* texts. Among the special rites prescribed for one who is being expelled

103 The passage (X. 3) is as follows:

*agnaye vaiśvānarāya dvādaśakapālam nirvapedyaḥ kāmacyetānena rājña vā grāmanyā vedam sasyamādadiyeti.* The reference to the *grāmaṇi* however is wanting in the corresponding passages of *MS. (II. 1. 2)* and *TS. (II. 2. 6)*.

104 It may be remarked that *grāmaṇi* in the *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* texts is rendered by all authorities as 'village headman.' Cf. Eggeling's tr. of *SB. V. 3. 1. 6; 4. 4. 18* etc., and *VI. s.v.*; also cf. Caland's rendering of *grāmaṇi* as 'dorf-oberste', 'gouverneur' (tr. of *Ap. ŚS. XVIII. 10. 12 n.*) and as 'praefectus urbi' (tr. of *PB. XIX. 1. 4*).

105 See *VS. XXX. 6.* Also cf. *TB. III 4. 15:—tūṣṇavadhman grāmanyam paṇisamghātam nṛtāya.*

106 Cf. *VI. s.v.*

107 The passage is as follows:—*vyatiśakto vai grāmaṇiḥ sajātaiḥ.* On this subject see below.

from his kingdom, there is one requiring him to take rice from the house (*TS.* II. 3. 1. 3, *KS.* XI. 6), or from the *sabbā* (*MS.* II. 2. 1) of a *grāmyavādin*. The reference to the *sabbā* probably means that the *grāmyavādin* held the office of village judge.<sup>108</sup> Taken in conjunction with the office of the *grāmanī*, this would suggest that the separation of executive and judicial functions was known to the village administration already at this early period.<sup>109</sup>

Along with the *sūta* we may mention the *sthapati* (tr. as 'chief judge' or 'governor'), an official already known to an *AV.* passage above cited. From the description of a sacrifice called *vaiśyasava* or *sthapatisava* in *BŚS.* XVIII. 3 and *Āp. ŚS.* XXII. 25. 2-5, Caland infers<sup>109a</sup> that the *sthapati* was probably a *vaiśya*. This fits in with the position of the *sthapati* as equivalent to that of the *sūta* in a *Rājasūya* ceremony; namely that of passing round of the sacrificial sword to a successive list of persons.<sup>109b</sup> On this supposition, however, it is difficult to understand how a *sthapati* could be mentioned as a ritual authority in *ŚB.* XII. 8. 1. 17 and another *sthapati* of the same name could be said to have performed the *Sautrāmanī* sacrifice in *ŚB.* XII 9. 3. 1 ff. Equally inexplicable is the term *niśādesthapati* of *KŚS.* I. 1. 12 and *Āp. ŚS.* IX. 14, 12, if it be taken to mean a *niśāda* as a *sthapati*. The omission of the *sthapati* in the list of *ratnins* at the *Rājasūya* is another point requiring explanation. But that the *sthapati*'s office was sufficiently important is suggested by *PB.* XVII. 11. 6. 7. mentioning a *sthapatisava* which

<sup>108</sup> Cf. *VI.* s.v., where the reference to *KS.* XI. 4 is a slip.

<sup>109</sup> According to *VI.* (s.v.) the epithet *śatapati* ('lord of a hundred') applied to Indra in *MS.* IV. 14. 12 and *TB.* II. 8. 4. 2 probably refers to a human functionary analogous to the lord of a hundred villages in *Manu* and the *Mahābhārata*. Not only is this interpretation very problematic, but it is rendered improbable by the high importance of the *grāmanī* in all our present sources which otherwise are completely silent about a higher officer in charge of a group of hundred villages.

<sup>109a</sup> See his note on tr. of *PB.* XVII. 11. 6.

<sup>109b</sup> See *ŚB.* V. 4. 4. 17.



should be performed by one "whom they consecrate for the office of *sthapati*."

Below the *sūta* and the *grāmaṇi* rank in the official hierarchy, if we are to judge from the order of enumeration of the *ratnins* at the *ratnahavimsi* ceremony of the *Rājasūya*, the officers severally called *kṣattr*, *saṃgrahitr*, *bhāgadugha*, *akṣāvāpa* and so forth.<sup>110</sup> The term *kṣattr* as used in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts has been taken by mediæval commentators to refer to an office of the royal household, or else a public office.<sup>111</sup> If this last sense could be adopted, it would throw valuable light upon the methods of administration in the late Vedic State. Modern scholars, however, have generally agreed to take *kṣattr* in the sense of 'chamberlain'.<sup>112</sup> We think that no sufficient reason has been given for departing from the old *Rgvedic* and *Atharvavedic* sense of 'distributor of food'.

Like the term *kṣattr* the title *saṃgrahitr* has been interpreted by mediæval commentators to refer to a public office or else an office of the royal household<sup>113</sup>. But its proper meaning has been found by modern interpreters to be 'charioteer'.<sup>114</sup> An interesting glimpse

110 For the order of *ratnins*, see the chart facing p. 249 in *The Beginnings* etc.

111 Thus *kṣattr* is explained by Mahidhara on VS. XXX 13 as *pratihāra* (door-keeper), by Sāyana on SB. V. 3. 1. 7 as *antahpurādhyakṣa* ('chamberlain'), by Harisvāmin on SB. XIII. 5. 4. 6 as *koṣādhyakṣa* ('treasurer'). *Kṣattr* is explained by Sāyana on SB. XIII. 4. 2. 5. as *āyavyayādhyakṣasamūha* ('group of revenue officers'). Bhaṭṭa Bhāṣkara on TS. I. 8. 9. explains *kṣattr* as *mantrin* or (according to some) *antahpurādhyakṣaḥ* ('chamberlain'). Other explanations are *mantri* or *dūta* (scholiast on KSS. XV. 3. 9) and *pratihāra* or *dūta* (scholiast on *ibid.* XX. 1. 16).

112 Cf. Eggeling's tr. of SB. V. 4. 6; XIII. 5. 2. 8. etc. and Caland's tr. of PB. XIX. 1. 4. In his tr. of Ap. SS. XVIII. 10. 2 Caland renders it as 'Kammerer'. On the other hand Keith in translating the TS. version of the *Śatarūdriya*, renders *kṣattr* and *saṃgrahitr* as 'door-keeper' and 'charioteer' respectively.

113 Thus Sāyana on TS. I. 8. 15 explains it as *śvapurāgrahadbāri* ('charioteer'). while he renders it in TS. I. 8. 9 as *dhanasaṃgrahakartā koṣādhyakṣaḥ* ('tax-collector') and in TB. III. 4. 7 as *bhāṇḍāgarādhyakṣaḥ* ('treasurer') or *karasaṃgrahakārin* (tax-collector). Bhaṭṭa Bhāṣkara on TS. I. 8. 9 renders it as *sārathīḥ* ('charioteer').

114 For this rendering see Eggeling's tr. of SB. V. 3. 1. 8 etc., Keith's tr. of TS.

of the privilege enjoyed by the *saṃgrahītṛ* is given in *AB.* II. 25 where we read how now also (when) the Bharatas attack the property of the Satvants, the *saṃgrahītṛs* claim a fourth (of the booty,) after the example of Indra.

As in the case of the *ksattr* and the *saṃgrahītṛ*, mediæval commentators have taken the *bhāgadugha* to stand either for a public officer or an officer of the royal household.<sup>115</sup> This latter interpretation has been adopted on good grounds by modern scholars.<sup>116</sup>

The term *akṣāvāpa* in opposition to its usually accepted interpretation as 'superintendent of gambling', or 'thrower of dice' has been taken by K. P. Jayaswal<sup>117</sup> in the sense of officer in charge of State accounts. But this explanation is negatived by such passages as *TS.* I. 8. 16 assigning to the *akṣāvāpa* the duty of marking the gaming-ground at the game of dice at the *Rājasūya*.

Another officer who emerges into notice at this period is the *pālāgala* or *pālākala* whom *SB.* V. 3. 1. 11 places last in the order of *ratnins* at the *Ratnahavimsi* ceremony of the *Rājasūya*. The *pālākala*, according to *Āp.* ŚS. XVIII. 10. 26, means *anṛtadūta* ('der Lügenbote') for which Caland somewhat doubtfully suggests the explanation 'der bote der die Lüge, d.h. die in Lande umhergehende Lüge dem Fürsten zu melden hat.' If this explanation may be accepted as correct, it would indicate that foreign relations had become sufficiently important in the late Vedic times to warrant the appointment of a special envoy to report the news about princes of

I. 8. 9 etc., Caland's tr. of *PB.* XIX. 1. 4 and his tr. ('Wagenlenker') in *Āp.* ŚS. XVIII. 10. 12.

<sup>115</sup> Thus Sāyaṇa (on *TS.* I. 8. 9, *TB.* I. 7. 3. 5 and III. 4. 8. 1, *SB.* V. 3. 1. 9 etc.) takes it as 'collector of taxes,' while in *SB.* I. 2. 17 he explains it as 'carver'. Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara on *TS.* I. 8. 9 explains it as *yo rājñasādibhāgam grhṇātī* (i.e. tax-collector).

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Eggeling's tr. of *SB.* I. 2. 7. Caland in his tr. of *Āp.* ŚS. XVII. 10. 12 n. renders it in the sense of 'Truchsessen' or 'Aufseher der Königlichen Herden.'

<sup>117</sup> *Hindu Polity*, pt. II. p. 19.

surrounding States. We have another indication of the same feature of the Late Vedic State in the fact that a *janyamitra* (otherwise called *janya*) meaning, as Caland (Āp. ŚS. tr., p. 145) has shown, 'a friend from a foreign country', figures in the category of persons besprinkling the king with holy water at the *Rājasūya* according to the White as well as the Black *Yajus* texts. Reference may be made in this connection to ŚB. XI. 2. 7. 17 which states in explanation of a ritual of the New and Full Moon sacrifices that *kṣatra* both (combines) together and (keeps) asunder. This is taken by Eggeling to mean that different kings either combine or keep separate from each other.

We may mention, in conclusion, two other offices known obscurely to our present sources, but destined to attain great importance in subsequent times. In AB. III. 20. 1. the term *saciva* is applied by the divine king Indra to the Maruts probably in a sense corresponding to the German *comes* or the English *gesith*.<sup>118</sup> Again, in the *Śatarudriya* text of the *Yajurveda* the title *mantrin* along with *vanik* ('the trader') is applied to the god Rudra.

Let us consider in the next place the significance of the reference to the individual *sūta*, *grāmaṇi*, *kṣattr*, *saṃgrahitr* etc. in the *ratnin* list of the *Rājasūya*. It has been suggested by Eggeling<sup>119</sup> that the *grāmaṇi* in this case stands either for the head of a large administrative division (perhaps comprising the whole country) or for a hereditary territorial proprietor residing near the place of coronation. None of these suggestions, however, is supported by facts. What is more, no analogous explanation evidently would apply in the case of the *sūta*, the *kṣattr*, the *saṃgrahitr* etc. who are mentioned in the same context. Is it possible to detect in this case an application of the principle of representation in the Vedic polity, to which we have other references in the *Rājasūya* ritual? Assuming the

<sup>118</sup> Cf. VI.s.v.

<sup>119</sup> See SBE., Vol. XLI, p. 60 n.

correctness of this supposition, the question must be left still open, namely, whether the representatives were elected by their respective orders or else nominated by the king.

We shall next discuss the status of the owners of *grāmas*, to whom we are introduced in other passages of our present sources. We have here a series of special sacrifices (*kāmyeṣṭis*) intended for one desirous of a *grāma* (*grāmakāma*). In this context the term *grāma* has been variously translated as 'herd of cattle',<sup>120</sup> 'clan',<sup>121</sup> and 'village'.<sup>122</sup> Even those who take *grāma* in the last sense have differed in their interpretation of the status of the person gaining the village. Thus it has been held to refer either to the grant of regalian rights by the king, or else the acquisition of landlord rights by one's own endeavour,<sup>123</sup> or finally the subjugation of the villagers by one's own self.<sup>123a</sup>

In considering the above views, we may begin by observing that our texts sometimes mention the *grāmakāma* and *paśukāma* (one desirous of cattle) side by side as participating in the same rite.<sup>124</sup> This is perhaps sufficient to rule out the sense of 'herd' for *grāma* in the present context. Again, it seems to accord

<sup>120</sup> Hopkins, *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 15, p. 32 quoted in VI. s.v.

<sup>121</sup> Caland in *PB.* XVIII 5. 8. Similarly he renders *grāmakāma* as 'one who is desirous of obtaining the chieftainship in his clan' (*PB.* XVII. 10. 3. and XVIII. 5. 7-8).

<sup>122</sup> Cf. VI. s.v.

<sup>123</sup> Thus the authors of VI. (s.v. *grāma*) quoting Teutonic parallels take *grāmakāma* to refer to grant of regalia rather than the grant of land. In *Addenda* and *Corrigenda* (s.v. *grāma*) to VI., however, we are told that in view of repeated references to obtaining pre-eminence over *śajātas* and *samānas* the phrase might also apply to the control obtained (e.g. by loans) by an ambitious man over his fellow-villagers and ending in his acquiring the position of a great landlord even without the king's intervention.

<sup>123a</sup> Thus Caland, referring to the phrase 'he drives unto him a village' quoted below takes it to mean 'he subjugates to himself the inhabitants of the village.'

<sup>124</sup> Cf. *MS.* II. 2. 3.; *PB.* XVIII. 10. 5-6.

best with the well-known prevalence of the territorial State in the *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* times to take *grāma* in the sense of 'village' instead of 'clan'.<sup>125</sup> Admitting the correctness of this last interpretation, the status of one acquiring a village can best be understood from the description of the texts themselves. In the relevant passages of the *TS.* we are repeatedly told how the *grāmakāma*, by performing the rites concerned, becomes *grāmī* ('possessed of a village'). In explanation of this point, we are further told that the god to whom the offering is made subjects his *sajātas* (tribesmen) to him,<sup>126</sup> makes his *sajātas* obedient to him<sup>127</sup>, removes his *sajātas* from him, in troops wins his *sajātas* for him, makes the *viś* follow him,<sup>128</sup> and more generally, makes the creatures abide steadfastly with him.<sup>129</sup>

We have a similar, but less clear indication of the status of the performer of the above rites in the *PB.* Thus *PB.* VI. 9. 1-2, explaining a certain laud meant to be taken as an opening one for a *grāmakāma*, says that the priest thereby drives unto him a *grāma*.<sup>130</sup> In *PB.* XVII. 10. 3 the result of performance of another rite by a *grāmakāma* is declared to be that he passes in the midst of them, they turn to him and surround him on all sides. Finally *PB.* XVIII. 5. 7-8, explaining the consequence of a *grāmakāma's* performing still another rite, observes that the *grāma* flows through

125 Even Caland who understands *grāma* and *grāmakāma* in the passage above cited to refer to the clan, elsewhere takes the latter term to mean 'one who is desirous of a village' and 'wer ein dorf wünscht'. See his tr. of *PB.* VI. 9. 1, XVIII. 5. 7-8; *Āp. ŚS.* XVIII. 10. 6.

126 Cf. *TS.* I. 3. 2. II. 1. 6. 7, II. 2. 11, II. 3. 3. 5, II. 3. 9. 2 etc.:—  
sa evāsmāi sajātān prayacchati (or ta evāsmāi sajātān prayacchanti).

127 Cf. *TS.* II. 2. 8. 1:—sa evāsmāi sajātānanukān karoti.

128 Cf. *TS.* 2. 5. 6-7:—asmai sajātānścyāvayati ..... gaṇaśa evāsmāi sajātān  
avarurundhe viśamevāsmā anuvartmānaṃ karoti.

129 Cf. *TS.* II. 1. 1. 2 dbruvā evāsmā anapagāḥ karoti.

130 *grāmamevāsmā upākāḥ* in the original.

him (i.e. departs from him) who being qualified to obtain a *grāma* does not obtain it and that the sacrifice serves to remove this defect.

Admitting the difficulty and obscurity of the texts under consideration, we may attempt here a provisional explanation. The *Yajus Samhitā* text above quoted, it will be noticed, repeatedly declares the object of the rite to be the subjection of *sajātas* ('tribesmen'). This striking phrase, we think, would be quite pointless if we were to understand the above to refer to the acquisition of regalian and landlord rights by one who for aught that we know might be a complete outsider. Again, the *PB.* text cited above implies that the sacrificer, though qualified to obtain a *grāma*, does not obtain it. The significance of this phrase would be completely lost, if we were to take the accompanying passage to refer to the subjugation of villagers by a person who conceivably might not have any title to the same. We think that the clue to the solution of the problem is to be found in the history of '*Raiyatwāri*' villages of tribal origin known to later times.<sup>131</sup> Such villages like the villages of Vedic times, were based on separate peasant holdings.<sup>132</sup> Again, they were governed by the single headmen corresponding somewhat to the *grāmanī* of the later *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. Applying this analogy still further, we may assume that the later Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* contemplate a village type in which the lands, though held severally, were occupied by clansmen and the powers of local administration were vested in a single headman enjoying the best title thereto apparently by virtue of his descent

✓ 131 On this type of Indian villages, see Baden-powell, *The Indian Village Community*, pp. 9-10, 225 ff.

132 For the *Rgvedic* evidence, see above, p. 3. For the evidence in the Later *Samhitās*, cf. *TS.* II. 2. 1. 2 referring to disputes, about fields, *TS.* III. 2. 8, *Ks.* V. 2. 12, *MS.* IV. 12. 3 referring to conquest of fields etc. In *CU.* VII. 24. 2 fields and houses along with cows and horses, elephants and gold, are mentioned as signs of wordly greatness.



from the supposed common ancestor. Assuming this interpretation to be correct, it may be asked whether the sacrificer performing the *grāmakāma* rites is to be identified with the *grāmaṇī* who is stated in a *Yajurveda* text cited above to live among his *sajātas*.<sup>133</sup> Though this question is not free from difficulties, we are tempted, provisionally at any rate, to answer it in the affirmative.

While on the present subject, we may notice a striking reference in a late Vedic text which seems to illustrate a remarkable development of village administration. We refer to *Kauśika Sūtra* (XX. 7) which mentions a rite by which one can obtain seven villages.<sup>134</sup> This has been taken to point to the acquisition of territorial lordship.<sup>135</sup> But it may equally refer to the administration of groups of villages by royal officers, such as is contemplated in *Manu* VII. 115 and the *Mahābhārata* XII. 68. 6-8 which, however, are completely unacquainted with administrative units of seven villages.

We may consider, in the next place, a few scattered references in the older *Upaniṣads* throwing interesting side-lights upon the administration of the late Vedic State. We begin with an interesting passage in *BU*.<sup>136</sup> introducing us in the form of a simile to two new administrative titles, viz., *ugra* and *pratyenas*, in addition to the older *sūta* and *grāmaṇī*.<sup>137</sup> In their non-technical sense these terms may be traced back to the Vedic *Sambhitās*, *ugra* in *RV*. VII. 38. 6 having the general sense of 'a mighty man', while *pratyenas* in *KS*. VIII. 4 means 'the next heir of a dead man.' In their

<sup>133</sup> See above p. 107.

<sup>134</sup> Text in Bloomfield's ed. p. 59; summary in Victor Henry, *La Magie*, p. 146.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Victor Henry who takes (*loc. cit.*) the seven villages to amount to 'une petite souveraineté'.

<sup>136</sup> IV. 3. 37-38.

<sup>137</sup> The simile describes the *ugra*, the *pratyenas*, the *sūta* and the *grāmaṇī* as waiting with food and drink for a king who is coming back and again as gathering around a king who is departing.

present context *ugra* and *pratyenas* no doubt stand for the king's executive officers, but their precise significance is unknown.<sup>138</sup> The growth of the king's administrative authority suggested by the above reference is also indicated by other passages. *PU.* III. 4 gives the simile of a king commanding his officials to rule these villages or those. If we are right in our supposition that the *grāmanī* of the *Yajus Sambhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* times was not unoften the head of the village administration, it would follow that at a later period the king sometimes stretched his authority so far as to nominate the headman. We may refer, finally, to a striking passage in *CU.* VII. 5 where *Aśvapati*, king of the *Kekayas*, desiring to induce a number of distinguished *Brāhmaṇas* to accept his hospitality tells them that in his kingdom "there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no man without an altar in his house, no ignorant person, no adulterer, much less an adulteress." A comparison of this extract with the *AV.* passage above cited relating to the kingdom of *Parikṣit* reveals a remarkable development of the ideas of good administration. The prosperity and contentment of the humble subject was no longer thought to be a complete test of good government. This last lay in the absolute immunity of the subjects from sins of every kind. The end of the Vedic Polity, in other words, was held to be not merely the life of the people, but their good life. On the other hand, it is a remarkable testimony to the continued insecurity of the king's tenure that *Kauśika Sūtra* XVI. 27-33 gives a series of magical rites accompanying certain *AV.* texts (I. 9. I. 29, III. 3-4 etc.) for the restoration of an exiled king to his kingdom.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Max Müller in translating the above passage (*SBE.* Vol. XV. p. 173) rendered *ugra* and *pratyenas* as policeman and magistrate respectively. Criticising this view, the authors of *VI. s.v.* accept the former rendering, but prefer to take *pratyenas* to mean the humbler servants of the king.

<sup>139</sup> Trans. by Caland, *Altindisches Zauberritual*, pp. 37-38; summary in Victor Henry, *La Magie*, pp. 148-49.

### Summary

As compared with the earlier times, the administrative organisation of the late Vedic State seems to indicate some important changes. We can only infer that the Sabhā, which was attended in these later times by dependant kings among others, functioned as the king's council and court. The creation of this smaller council out of the larger Popular Assembly called by the same name probably marked the completion of a process which, as we have suggested before, had begun to manifest itself in *AV.* times. We may recall in this connection that according to some *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* texts quoted above, the King's Justice seems to have prevailed over all private jurisdictions, while the king no doubt as the Fountain of Justice was held to be exempt from punishment. The advanced character of the later State administration is apparent in other respects. The king levied the *bali* as a regular tax payable by the common freemen, thus ensuring the foundation of a strong centralised government. For the rest, we find a body of old and new officials (viz. the *senānī*, the *sūta*, the *sthapati*, the *grāmanī*, the *kṣattr* and the *saṃgrabitṛ*) participating in the great kingly sacrifices, the *Rājasūya* and the *Aśvamedha*. The *sūtas* and the *grāmanīs*, in particular, are called 'non-royal king-makers' probably meaning that they in common with the princes and nobles ('royal king-makers') had a controlling voice in the choice of kings. We know little of the functions of the officers of the late Vedic State other than the *senānī* and the *grāmanī*. The *senānī*, as before, was the head of the military administration. It is perhaps significant of the inferior position of the military branch as compared with the civil, that the *senānī* is given a subordinate position in various ceremonies of the royal consecration. The reference to the divisions of the army founded on purely military lines in place of the old kingship basis furnishes a

fresh illustration of the change from the tribal to the territorial State which is characteristic of our times. Indicative of the same change is the fact that the *grāmanī*, perhaps a troop-leader in earlier times, had now definitely become the head of the village administration both for civil and military purposes. Probably in many cases the *grāmanī* was the head of the village clansmen and the passionate desire for winning a *grāma* which is testified to by our texts may refer to this aspiration for a *grāmanī*'s office. Only in a late Vedic text we are introduced to what looks like territorial lordships or governorships extending over a number of villages. Mention may be made, in conclusion, of a remarkable *Upaniṣad* passage which shows by contrast with an old *AV.* text how the end of the State was conceived to be no longer the bare life, but the good life of the people.

### *Councils & Assemblies.*

Like the institutions of kingship and the administrative machinery, the Popular Assemblies of the *Rgvedic* and *Atharvavedic* times underwent important changes in the period with which we are here concerned. In the earlier period the Popular Assembly called the *samiti* was regarded as the king's most important asset. In the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, however, it is left without a mention. When it makes its re-appearance in the older *Upaniṣads* (where it is known by a synonymous title *Parīṣad*), it is found to be attended by the king and learned *Brāhmaṇas*. But there is nothing to indicate that it was a popular body. Nor is there anything to point to its exercise of public functions except in so far as we may infer this from the presence of the king.<sup>140</sup> We may then assume

<sup>140</sup> For this reference to the *samiti* with its alternative designation of *parīṣad*, see the story of King Pravāhaṇa Jaivali's meeting with the *Brāhmaṇa* youth Śvetaketu, which has come down to us in two different recensions viz. *CU.* V. 3. 1 ff. and *BU.* VI. 2. 1 ff.

that the *samiti*, the Popular Assembly *par excellence* of the *Rgvedic* and *Atharvavedic* times, had dwindled at this period into an aristocratic council presided over by the king and probably exercising some public functions.

Unlike the *samiti* the old Vedic *sabhā* continued to function during the *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* times. In *JUB.* II. 11. 13. 14 mention is made of the divine counterpart (*daivī sabhā*) of the earthly *sabhā*, with which may be compared the *daivī samiti* of *RV.* X. 11. 8 quoted above. The *sabhā*, again, sat with sufficient frequency to have its own President (*sabhāpati* or *sabhāpāla*) who was evidently distinct from the king.<sup>141</sup> From other indications it appears that the *sabhā* had somewhat changed its character. In the distinction drawn in *AV.* XIX. 55. 6 between the *sabhāsad* and the *sabhya* we have elsewhere sought to trace the rise of a narrower royal council and court by the side of the larger Popular Assembly.<sup>142</sup> In the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *sabhā* appears before us more or less definitely in the form of the royal court and council. Firstly, as regards its constitution, we find that women were excluded from attending it.<sup>143</sup> More important is the testimony of an important *Brāhmaṇa* passage which suggests that it was attended by dependant kings—a phenomenon quite in accordance with the emergence of overlordship in a more concrete form

<sup>141</sup> For references to *sabhāpati* see the *Śatarudriya* text of the *Yajurveda* (*TS.* IV. 5. 3. 2; *KS.* XVII. 13; *MS.* II. 9. 1-9; *VS.* XVI. 24) where *sabhās* and *sabhāpatis* are included in the list of those identified with the god Rudra.

<sup>142</sup> See above p. 48.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. *MS.* IV. 7. 4:—*pumāṃsah sabhām yanti na striyaḥ*. A humorous reference is made to the exclusion of women from the *sabhā* in *KB.* VII. 9 where we read:—"It would be as if he were to bring the wives of the gods to the place of the assembly: then it would be as if a man there were to say of him. 'This (fellow) has brought the wives of the gods to the place of their assembly; his wife will be following him to the assembly.'"

than before during the present period.<sup>144</sup> In keeping with the aristocratic composition of the *sabbhā* as suggested above, is the fact that membership of this body appears from other texts to have carried with it a high social status. Thus in *T.S.* VII. 1. 8 we have the legend of Aurva who by performing a certain rite obtained four sons—a good *hotṛ*, a good *udgātr*, a good *adhvaryu* and a *susabhya*. To us it seems that the term *susabhya* here should be taken in its natural sense of 'a good councillor.' From this it follows that members of the *sabbhā* occupied the same social status as the chief priests at the *Śrauta* sacrifices—nay more, they often belonged to the same family.<sup>145</sup> Again, in the course of a benedictory prayer, (the so-called *annaboma mantra*) at the *Aśvamedha* which is common to all the *Yajus Samhitā* schools,<sup>146</sup> the wish is expressed for the birth of a *brāhmaṇo brahmavarcaṣī* (Brāhmaṇa endowed with spiritual lustre), a *rājanya śavyo śūro mahārathāb* (rājanya heroic, skilled in archery, a mighty car-fighter), a *sabbheyo yuvā* etc. The last term, it seems to us should properly be taken to mean 'a youth fit for the *sabbhā*. Evidently then, membership of the *sabbhā* involved a sufficiently high social position to be sought for in a solemn ritual prayer. It further appears from the above that the member of the *sabbhā*

144 The passage which occurs in *SB.* III. 3. 4. 14 (*Mādhyandina* recension) is as follows:—*apyasya rājānaḥ sabbhāgā āgacchanti pūrvō rājño 'bhivadati bhadro hi bhavati*. It is thus translated by Eggeling (*SBE.* XXVI. pp. 79-80):—"Even his [Soma's own] kings come (to him) to attend the assembly and he is the first to salute the kings, for he is gracious." On the other hand, as Eggeling points out in the same context, the *Kāṇva* text gives a completely different version which he translates as follows:—"For he is his gracious lord, therefore he heeds not even a king; and yet he is the first to salute the kings; thus he is indeed gracious to him."

145 Keith, while translating *susabhya* in the above passage as 'a good councillor,' remarks that it may refer either to skill in council or merely the elegance of demeanour in society. We, however, think that the latter interpretation would be quite pointless, in view of the parallel references to concrete professions like those of the *hotṛ*, the *udgātr* and the *adhvaryu*.

146 See *TS.* VII. 5. 18; *VS.* XXII. 22; *MS.* III. 12. 6; *KS.* (*Aśvamedha*) V. 5. 14.



became a full social asset matching the spiritual Brāhmaṇa and the fighting Rājanya, when to his other qualification was added the charm of youth. This is brought out clearly in *ŚB.* XIII 1. 9. 8 explaining the prayer in *VS.* XXII. 22, where we were told that the *sabbheyo yuvā* is in the prime of life, and as such, is apt to become dear to women.<sup>147</sup>

The functions of the *sabbā* during the present period are in harmony with its changed constitution. We no longer hear of the general deliberations of the *sabbā* or of its participation in the affairs of State administration.<sup>148</sup> On the other hand we find the *sabbā-cara* dedicated to *dharma* (justice) in the list of symbolical victims at the *puruṣamedha* (human sacrifice). This suggests that the *sabbā-cara* like the *sabbāsad* of the *AV.* times was a member of the court of justice meaning no doubt the king's court.<sup>149</sup> Again, we have a set of parallel passages<sup>150</sup> in the *Yajus Samhitās* containing a prayer by a royal sacrificer and his wife for expiation of 'the wrong done in village or forest, in the *sabbā*, in the *indriyas*', 'the wrong done to

147 The *ŚB.* passage (XIII. 1. 9. 8) quoted above is in the original as follows:—

*yo vai pūruvayasi sa sabbheyo yuvā tasmād yuvā pumān strinām priyo bhāvunkaḥ.* It is thus translated by Eggeling:—"He indeed is a blitheful (or sociable) youth who is in his prime of life: whence one who is in his prime of life is apt to become dear to women." In translating the corresponding *TS.* text (VII. 5. 18) Keith renders *sabbheyo yuvā* as 'a youth fit for the assembly', but he remarks at the same time that Eggeling's version of a blithful youth may convey the correct sense. In our view the concrete references to the spiritual Brāhmaṇa and the fighting Rājanya in the same context requires for *sabbheyo yuvā* an equally concrete sense such as is implied in the membership of the *sabbā*.

148 Significant of the decline of the Popular Assembly is the *ŚB.* passage VII. 1. 1. 4 quoted elsewhere, which suggests that although the king's distribution of the public land with the will of the people was still held to be in accordance with the customary law, he sometimes used to dispose of it by his arbitrary authority.

149 The authors of VI. (s.v. *sabbācara*) suggest the above to refer to assessors deciding legal cases and meeting oftener than the assembly. In the later *Smritis* no doubt the king normally decides suits with the assistance of the *sabbā*. But direct evidence to this effect is lacking for *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* times.

150 See *VS.* III. 45. XX. 17; *TS.* I. 8. 3. 1; *MS.* I. 10. 2; *KS.* IX. 4.

Sūdra or Aryan' and so forth. We think we can trace here a reference to the political activities of the *sabhā* functioning probably as the king's council as well as court.<sup>151</sup> How close was the association of the *sabhā* with the king is illustrated by a legend common to *A.B.* VIII 21 and *Ś.B.* XIII. 5. 4. 6. The legend relates to a famous king Marutta Āvikṣita of whom a *gāthā* is quoted to the effect that the Maruts dwelt in his house as *pariveṣṭāraḥ* ('guardsmen', Eggeling; 'attendants', Keith), that Agni was his *kṣattā* ('chamberlain', Eggeling) and that the All-gods were his *sabbāsads* ('councillors', Eggeling; 'assessors', Keith). From the fact that the *sabbāsads* are here mentioned in the same breath with *pariveṣṭṛs* and *kṣattṛs* (two well-known titles of the king's personal attendants since *R̥gvedic* and *Atharvavedic* times), we may perhaps infer that the *sabhā* was a sort of Privy Council of the king. We may refer finally to a Vedic *mantra* quoted in the late *P.G.S.* which seems to testify to the *sabhā's* function in early times. Here the *sabhā* is called *nādiḥ* and *tviṣiḥ* explained by the commentator Jayarāma respectively as *nardanaśilā* ('sounding') and *diptā* ('shining'), but which Oldenberg renders somewhat differently as 'trouble' and 'vehemence' respectively. In the above striking phrases K. P. Jayaswal finds a reference to the activity of the *sabhā* as a court, but they may equally refer to the disputes in the king's council.<sup>152</sup>

151 Mahidhara, commenting on *VS.* XX. 17 takes 'the wrong done in the *sabhā* to refer to the sin like partiality in deciding disputes and so forth (*paksapātādi yadenam*), while elsewhere (commentary on III. 45) he takes it to refer to the attack on the great and so forth (*mahājana-tiraskārādikamenam*). On the authority of this explanation Ludwig held (*Rev. tr.* III. 254) the *sabhā* to be a court, while Zimmer (*Alt. Leben*, pp. 172-174) declared that the *sabhā* decided local suits. On the other hand Eggeling (*SBE.* Vol. XII. p. 398 n) suggested that the wrong in question might refer to gambling and other non-political activities of the *sabhā*. This view is accepted as an alternative explanation in VI. s.v. *sabhā*. To us it seems that the solemnity and comprehensiveness of the penitential formula given above, best accord with the political activities of the royal pair in the *sabhā*.

152 For references see *Pāraskara-Gṛhyasūtra* with Jayarāma's Commentary, ed.

We have suggested above in the light of the scanty data at our disposal that the *samiti* of the *R̥gvedic* and *Athārvavedic* times sank during the present period into insignificance, while the *sabbhā* shrank from a Popular Assembly into the King's Court and Privy Council.<sup>152a</sup> But unfavourable as were the *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmana* times for the growth of Popular Assemblies, they seem to have preserved traces of popular influence upon the working of the State administration. Prayer for the gift of speech is offered not merely on behalf of the royal sacrificer at the *Rājasūya*, but also on behalf of the sacrificer at the *Vājapeya* and even at the ceremony of the Fire-ritual.<sup>153</sup> How important the gift of speech continued to be down to comparatively late times is proved by *B.U.* VI. 4. 18 mentioning a rite for obtaining a learned (*paṇḍita*) son, a famous public man (*samitiṅgama*), a popular speaker (*śuśrūṣitām vācam bhāsitā*) and so forth. In the same context (VI. 1. 2.) we are told in cryptic language that speech is the richest.<sup>154</sup> More important than the above is the mention of rites for acquiring the gift of speech. Thus *T.S.* VII. 1. 10. 2 and 3 introducing a certain legend refers to a rite by performing which one becomes speaker of speech (*vācam pravaditā*) and is called lord of speech (*vācaspati*).<sup>155</sup> Other

M. G. Bakre, Bombay 1917, pp. 392-93; Oldenberg, *SBE*. Vol. XXIX. p. 362; Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, Part I, pp. 18-19.

<sup>152a</sup> We may find a probable historical parallel to the above in the rise of the Witenagemot in place of the old Folkmoot in the Anglo-Saxon constitution. The change in either case may be ultimately traced to the rise of large territorial kingdoms in place of the small tribal organizations of earlier times.

<sup>153</sup> For the *Rājasūya* reference, cf. *VS.* IX. 39, *SB.* V. 3. 3. 5 etc. For the *Vājapeya*, cf. *TS.* I. 7. 7 and 10 etc. For the Fire-ritual, cf. *TS.* IV. 1. 1 etc.

<sup>154</sup> *vāg vai vasiṣṭhā* in the original.

<sup>155</sup> The passage in Keith's tr. is as follows:—

"Barbara Pravāhaṇi desired, 'May I be a speaker of speech.' He grasped the five-night rite and sacrificed with it. Then indeed he became a speaker of speech. He who, knowing thus, offers the five-night rite becomes a speaker of speech and men call him 'lord of speech.'"

passages in our present sources mention rites for gaining influence among men. Such perhaps is *PB.* VI. 10. 12-13, recommending a certain *SV.* text for one desiring to fare well among men.<sup>156</sup> More decisive is a series of parallel texts<sup>157</sup> occurring in the *Yajus Samhitās* mentioning rites for influencing the *janatā*. In the above *janatā* has been taken to be 'practically equivalent to *sabbā*'.<sup>158</sup> But in the absence of more direct evidence it is perhaps better to take it in the more general sense of 'assembly'. Even in this wider sense the texts cited above would seem to indicate that the *vox populi* was still a factor to be reckoned with in the working of the late Vedic State.

We may notice, in the present place, a number of late Vedic texts which may be thought to have the same import as those we have just considered. Thus *Kausika-Sūtra* (XXXVIII. 17-21) mentions a number of rites (with appropriate *mantras* from *AV.*) for ensuring success in the *pariṣad*.<sup>159</sup> Parallels to these rites which are aptly called *pariṣajjayakarma* or *sabbākarma* by *Keśava* in his commentary on the *Kausika-Sūtra* text cited above are found in other late sources.<sup>160</sup> If, as we think, the *pariṣad* or the *sabbā* in these later times signified only the king's council and court, the rites con-

<sup>156</sup> Caland alternatively translates the last phrase as 'one who desires to fare well in a foreign country.'

<sup>157</sup> See *KS.* IX. 17, *MS.* II. 1. 1., *TS.* II. 1. 4. The *TS.* text which is the fullest one is given below in Keith's tr.:—"Now power and strength depart from him who goes to the assembly [*janatā*]: let him who is about to go to the assembly make an offering to Indra and Agni on eleven potsherds. Verily Indra and Agni he has recourse to with their own share: verily they place power and strength in him, with power and strength he goes to the assembly." In the *K.S.* and *MS.* texts the persons performing the rites and respectively described as *yah kāmāyetāsyāṃ me janatāyaṃ idhyeta* and *janatāmabhiprayānah*.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Keith's note on his tr. of the *TS.* text quoted above.

<sup>159</sup> Text in Bloomfield's ed., p. 105; tr. by Caland, *Altindisches Zauberritual*, pp. 130-31.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. *Sāmavidhāna Brāhmaṇa* II. 7. 12-13, *PGS.* III. 13.

cerned would be no index of popular influence on the administration of the Vedic State.

*The question of representation of classes.*

We may here consider a number of passages bearing upon the important question of political representation in the Vedic State. We begin with the texts of the Black Yajus ritual<sup>161</sup> including the individual *rājanya* in the list of *ratnins* at whose houses the king performs the ceremony of 'Jewel-offering' at the *Rājasūya*. To the *rājanya* one particular authority (*MS.* II. 6. 5 and IV. 4. 3. 8.) further adds the single *takṣan* and *rathakāra* (carpenter and chariot-maker). The high constitutional status assigned here to these personages is in accord with precedent. For, as we have seen, *AV.* III. 5. 7-8 ranks the clever chariot-makers and the skilful smith along with the royal king-makers, the *sūtas* and the *grāmanīs* among persons whom a newly consecrated king desires to have as his dependants. In the reference to the single *rājanya*, *takṣan* and *rathakāra*, however, we notice a new factor, viz. the attempt to apply the principle of representation to the order of nobles and that of skilled craftsmen in connection with a great State function.

In other passages of our present authorities the principle of political representation is sought to be extended to the great divisions of society. One of the minor ceremonies of the *Rājasūya* is a game of dice which the royal sacrificer has to play and win ceremoniously. In the Black Yajus ritual this consists in a Brāhmaṇa, a Kṣatriya, a Vaiśya and a Śūdra playing for a cow after the Akṣāvāpa ('thrower of dice') had ceremoniously marked the gaming-ground. The staking of the cow and its loss by the representatives of the four classes is doubtless a symbolical act signifying the solemn asertion of

<sup>161</sup> *TS.* I. 8. 9 1 ff., *MS.* II. 6. 5, IV. 3. 8; *KS.* XV. 4; *TB.* I. 7. 3.

the king's rule over them.<sup>162</sup> More important than the above is the reference to one of the central ceremonies of the *Rājasūya*, viz. that at which the sacrificer is besprinkled with holy water by a group of four persons. In the White Yajus ritual these persons are designated as follows:—

*adhvaryu* (or *purohita*), *sva* ('king's kinsman or brother'),  
*mitrarājanya* ('friendly *rājanya*') and *vaiśya* (*ŚB.* V. 3.  
 5. 11-14 and 4. 2. 2).

In the Black Yajus ritual the persons mentioned are:—

*adhvaryu*, *rājanya*, *vaiśya* and *janya* (*TB.* I. 7. 8. 7)  
*adhvaryu*, *brahman* (or *kṣatriya*), *vaiśya* and *janya-mitra*  
 (*Āp.* ŚS. XVIII. 16. 1-5).

(*Hir.* quoted in Caland, *Āp.* ŚS. tr. p. 145).

*brahman*, *vaiśya*, *bhrātṛvya* and *janya* (*Mān* ŚS. quoted,  
 Caland, *loc. cit.*)

*brahman*, *vaiśya*, *bhrātṛvya* and *janya-mitra* (*MS.* IV. 4. 2).

In the above, *adhvaryu* of all the other texts evidently corresponds to *brahman* of *MS.* and *Mān.* ŚS. lists and 'the king's own man' of the *ŚB.* passage to the *rājanya* (or *kṣatriya* or *bhrātṛvya*) of other texts, while the *vaiśya* is common to all lists. It thus appears that the *adhvaryu* (or *brahman*), the *rājanya* (or his equivalents) and the *vaiśya* representing the three higher classes are made to participate in the act of the king's consecration with the holy water. Here, then, as we have remarked elsewhere,<sup>163</sup> we have the closest approach to the principle of representation of Estates that the Vedic State ever attained.

<sup>162</sup> No parallel to the above is found in the White Yajus ritual where the *adhvaryu* and the tribesman (*sajāta*) are described as preparing the gaming-ground with the sacrificial sword and thereafter the *adhvaryu* as winning for the king a cow staked by the tribesman. For fuller details, see *The Beginnings* etc. pp. 271-72.

<sup>163</sup> See *The Beginnings* etc. p. 267.



*Status of classes and other social groups: A. General*

Compared with the scanty data to be gleaned from the *AV.*, we have in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* a mass of facts bearing upon the status of different classes and sections of the people in the Late Vedic State. But rich as is this material, it suffers from serious and characteristic drawbacks. While the references to the religious rights (or disabilities) of the classes concerned are clear enough, the account of their civil status is very imperfect. To take a few examples, the *wergeld* (*vairadeya*) of a hundred cows for males is known to the Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* from early times and is referred to as an accepted fact in the *AB.* story of Śunaḥśepa (VII 13 ff.). But we have to wait till the times of the *Dharma-sūtras* for a scale of *wergeld* graduated according to the difference of classes. With this may be contrasted the abundant lists of *wergeld*, *mund* (or *borg*) and *wite* known to Anglo-Saxon laws, which have proved to be such a rich store of materials for reconstruction of the status of different social ranks in Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>164</sup> Again, we have in *AB.* VII. 29 what may be called the classical statement of the disabilities of the *Brāhmaṇa*, *Vaiśya* and *Sūdra* as compared with the *Kṣatriya*. But in the context in which it stands, it is evidently meant to console the *Kṣatriya* sacrificer for his own prescribed sacrificial food so unlike those laid down for the other classes. It seems, as such, purposely designed to emphasise the degraded condition of the other classes (not excluding the *Brāhmaṇas*) in comparison with the *Kṣatriyas*. It is evident that we have here, unless corroborated otherwise, a picture of the Late Vedic Society and State not in its normal condition, but at the peak of the *Kṣatriya*'s fortunes.

<sup>164</sup> On the above, see H. Munro Chadwick, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge, 1905) Chs. III-IV.

B. *The Śūdra's status.*

We may best approach the question of the Śūdra's status in the Late Vedic Polity through the legends of cosmic creation laid down for the first time in our present sources. In the two legends quoted above (*TS.* I. 7. 1. 14-16 and *PB.* VI. 1. 11) the four classes are evidently regarded as corresponding to as many separate categories of created beings. Other stories of creation in the *Brāhmaṇas* tend to exclude the Śūdras from fellowship of the *Brāhmaṇas*, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas who alone are said to be created by the Supreme Deity.<sup>165</sup> Thus *ŚB.* II. 1. 4. 11 mentions Prajāpati's creation of three triads, each of which is expressly declared to be co-extensive with the universe. These comprise the series—earth, ether and sky, *Brāhmaṇa*, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya and lastly, the Self, the human race and the animals.<sup>165</sup> Again, *TB.* I. 2. 6. 7 shows its sense of contrast between *Brāhmaṇa* and Śūdra by saying that the former sprang from the gods and the latter from the Asuras. In another *TB.* passage (*III.* 2. 3. 9) the Śūdra is said to have sprung from non-existence.

In complete accord with the above views is the attitude of our authors regarding the Śūdra's place in the social system. Passages are not wanting in the *Yajus Samhitā* texts to indicate that the Śūdra was recognised as a member of the same community with the Ārya. Take e.g. the parallel series of penitential formulas contain-

165 The passage in Eggeling's tr. (*SBE.* Vol. XII, p. 296) is as follows: 'Verily with 'bhūh' (earth) Prajāpati generated this (earth), with 'bhuvah' (ether) the ether, with 'svah' (heaven) the sky. As far as these three worlds extend, so far extends this universe: with the universe it (the fire) is accordingly established. With 'bhūh' Prajāpati generated the *Brahman* (priesthood), with 'bhuvah'! the *kṣatra* (nobility), with 'svah' the *Viś* (the common people). As much as are the *Brahman*, the *Kṣatra* and the *Viś*, so much is this universe; with the universe it (the fire) is accordingly established. With 'bhūh' Prajāpati generated the Self, with 'bhuvah' the (human) race, with 'svah' the animals. As much as are the Self, the (human) race and the animals, so much is this universe: with the universe it (the fire) is accordingly established."

ing prayers for expiation of wrong done to Śūdra or Aryan, that the sacrificer has to utter at various sacrifices both according to the White and the Black Yajus rituals.<sup>166</sup> Consider also the prayer uttered on behalf of the Śūdra as well as the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya (or Rājanya) and Vaiśya at other ceremonies.<sup>167</sup> Nevertheless our sources leave us in no doubt about the degraded condition of the Śūdras in comparison with the other classes. We shall illustrate this point by a few examples. *SB.* XIII. 6. 2. 10 identifies the Śūdra with toil, while the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya and the Viś are identified with Brahma, Kṣatra and the Maruts respectively. That the Śūdra was associated with un-Aryan ways of living is illustrated by the famous legend of Sunahśepa quoted above, where a Brāhmaṇa father who has sold his son as a sacrificial victim is stigmatised for his śūdra way (*śaūdranyāya*). In *JUB.* III. 7 ff. giving the story of a disputation among three fellow-students, the term Śūdra is used as a synonym for an ignoramus (*duranūcāna*) and disputation without witnesses is said to be in the manner of Śūdras.

It is on the basis of such arguments about the moral inferiority of the Śūdra that he is burdened in other texts with grievous disabilities, both religious and civil. As regards the first point we have seen how the stories of cosmic creation in *TS.* VII. 1. 1. 4-6 and *PB.* VI. 1. 6-11 make out the Śūdra to be unfit for sacrifice on the ground that he was not created after any gods and that he has no deity, as no deity had come into existence after him. In other passages the exclusion of the Śūdra is extended to his participation in the sacrificial ritual. Thus *KS.* XI. 10 disqualifies the Śūdras

<sup>166</sup> Cf. *VS.* XX. 17 for the *Sautrāmaṇi* sacrifice, *TS.* I. 8. 3 for the *Rājasūya* sacrifice.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. *VS.* XVIII. 48 describing the ceremony of *vasordhārā*, i.e. consecration service for king Agni on completion of the fire-altar. Also cf. *TS.* V. 7. 6, 4 and *KS.* XL. 13 describing certain ceremonies of the fire-ritual

along with women for drinking Soma.<sup>168</sup> According to *KS.* XXXI. 2 and *MS.* IV. 1. 3 no Śūdra should milk the cow for milk required at the *Agnihotra* ('oblation to Agni'). This ban is sought to be justified on the ground that the Śūdra is born out of evil and what is evil transgresses purity.<sup>169</sup> The same sentiments are echoed by the *Brāhmaṇas*. *ŚB.* III. 1. 1. 9-10, while laying down rules for the initiation of the sacrificer at the *Agniṣṭoma*, forbids access to the sacred shed (*prācīnavamśa*) to the Śūdra. For, as we are told in language recalling the *TS.* and *PB.* passages above quoted, a Brāhmaṇa, a Rājanya and a Vaiśya are alone eligible to the sacrifice (*yajñiyāb*). Continuing in the same strain, *ŚB.* forbids any conversation of the consecrated with the Śūdra. "For he who is consecrated draws nigh to the gods and becomes one of them, but the gods do not commune with every one but only with a Brāhmaṇa or a Rājanya or a Vaiśya, for these are able to sacrifice." So also *ŚB.* XIV. 1. 1. 31 forbids the performer of the *pravargya* (hot-milk) sacrifice to have contact with the Śūdra. This is justified by identifying the Śūdra along with others with untruth<sup>170</sup>—a dictum epitomising the priestly authors' view of the moral inferiority of the class concerned. In the same context the *ŚB.* states that the sacrificer should not look at the Śūdra and such others, lest he should mingle excellence and sin, light and darkness, truth and un-truth. Finally, *TB.* III. 2. 3. 9, taking its cue from the *KS.* and *MS.* passages quoted above, forbids the Śūdra to milk the cow for milk required at the *Agnihotra*, on the ground that he is sprung out of evil.<sup>171</sup>

168 *tasmāt karīrāṇi na striyaidadyānna śūdrāyāsomapītha iva byeṣa.*

169 The *KS.* passage is as follows:—*na śūdro duhyādasato vā eṣa sambhūto satsyādya dvāva pavitramatyeti taddhviragnihotrāmeva śūdro na duhyāt taddhi notpunanti.* The *MS.* passage is practically the same.

170 *anrtam strī śūdraḥ śvā kṛṣṇaḥ śakunib.*

171 *śūdra eva na duhyāt asato vā eṣa sambhūtaḥ yacchūdraḥ ahavireva tadit-yābuh yacchūdro dogdhi.*

Other texts bring out the religious disabilities of the Sūdra, into strong relief by deliberately ignoring his fellowship with the three higher classes at the sacrificial ritual. Thus in the besprinkling ceremony of the *Rājasūya* which, indeed, is its central theme, the king is required to be besprinkled with holy water, according to White as well as Black Yajus ritual, by the *adhvaryu* (or the *brahman* priest) the *rājanya* (or the *Kṣatriya* or *Bhrātr̥ya*), the *Vaiśya* and (instead of the Sūdra) a *Janya-mitra* ('friendly ally').<sup>172</sup> The complete exclusion of the Sūdra is reflected even in the formulae accompanying the ritual. Thus in the *mantra* for the king's symbolically mounting the quarters at the *Rājasūya*, the East, South and West are associated respectively with *Brahma*, *Kṣatra* and *Viś* while the North and the Zenith are respectively connected with *puṣṭam* (abundance) and with *balam* (strength) or *phalam* (fruit).<sup>173</sup> Similarly in the *mantra* for laying down different classes of bricks at the *Agnicayana* ceremony the East, South, West, North and Zenith are associated respectively with *brahma*, *kṣatra*, *viś* and (instead of the Sūdra) prosperity, radiance (or fruit).<sup>174</sup> Of the same nature is *SB.* XI. 2. 7. 14 ff. stating that the sacrificer by performing a certain ritual act wins whatever is to be gained by *brahman*, by *kṣatra*, by *viś* and (instead of the Sūdra) by *rāṣṭra*, *tapas* and *śraddhā* ('royal dignity, fervid devotion, faith').

In a few cases our authorities admit the Sūdra to participation in the sacrifice, but the function assigned to him helps only to emphasise his inferior status. Thus *KS.* XXXVII. 1 mentions a ceremony at which the sacrificer makes gifts of diminishing value, viz.

<sup>172</sup> See the texts quoted above, p. 126. For full references, see *The Beginnings* etc. pp. 264-5.

<sup>173</sup> See *TS.* I. 8. 13 and *VS.* X. 10-14 (with *puṣṭam dravinam* and *balam dravinam*); *MS.* II. 6. 10; 11 1 (with *puṣṭam dravinam* and *phalam dravinam*).

<sup>174</sup> *TS.* IV. 3. 3. (with *puṣṭam dravinam* and *varco dravinam*), *MS.* II. 7. 20 (with *puṣṭam dravinam* and *phalam dravinam*).

gold (*hiranya*), the bow and arrow (*tisṛdhanya*), the goad (*aṣṭrā*) and beans (*māṣakamaṇḍalu*) to a Brāhmaṇa, a Rājanya, a Vaiśya and a Śūdra respectively for the successive purchase of strength, vigour, nourishment and longevity.<sup>175</sup> In *KS. XXXIV. 5* and *TB. I. 2. 6. 7* we are introduced to a rite of the *Mahāvratā* sacrifice, involving a mimic fight between an Ārya and a Śūdra for possession of a white round skin symbolising the sun. Similarly *PB. V. 5. 14-16* refers to a rite of the *Gavām Ayana* ('way of the cows') at which there was a mimic fight between an Ārya and a Śūdra ending in the victory of the former. Elsewhere the Śūdra is declared eligible along with the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya to the New and Full moon sacrifices, but different forms of address varying in degrees of politeness are prescribed for them.<sup>176</sup>

We may fittingly conclude this discussion by citing a unique Brāhmaṇa text explaining the consequences of admitting the Śūdras and other low-born folk to participation in a *Rājasūya* ceremony. Immediately after the Jewel-offering ceremony the sacrificer has to make an offering to Soma and Rudra as well as Mitra and Bṛhaspati (according to the White Yajus ritual), to Indra *Sutrāman* (Indra the protector) and Indra *Abhōmuc* (Indra who frees from darkness) as well as Mitra and Bṛhaspati (according to the Black Yajus ritual). Referring to the offerings to the first set of deities, *SB. V. 3.2. 1-4* explains that they are an act of expiation for the sacrificer's entering darkness (or else departing from the path of sacrifice) because

<sup>175</sup> *Hiranyam brahmaṇe dadāti tejastena parikrīṇāti tisṛdhanvaṃ rājanyāyan-jastena parikrīṇātiyaṣṭrāṃ vaiśyāya puṣṭim tena parikrīṇāti māṣakamaṇḍalum śūdrāyāyustena parikrīṇāti.*

<sup>176</sup> See *SB. I. 1. 4. 12*:—"Now there are four different forms of this call [to the *Haviṣkṛt*, the preparer of the sacrificial food], viz. 'Come hither (*ebhi*)!' in the case of a Brāhmaṇa, 'approach (*āgahi*)!' and 'hasten hither (*ādhrava*)!' in the case of a Vaiśya and a member of the military caste and 'run hither (*ādhāva*)!' in that of a Śūdra." Cf. *Ap. SS. I. 19. 9* etc.



of his putting those unworthy of the sacrifice (either Śūdras or whomsoever else) in contact with the sacrifice. According to this view, therefore, allowing the participation of the Śūdras and other persons of an inferior class in 'the Jewel-offering ceremony' is a sinful act requiring expiation on the part of the sacrificer. What constitutes the uniqueness of this explanation is that it is unknown not only to the authorities of the Black Yajus school, but even to other authorities on the White Yajus ritual.<sup>177</sup>

The civil status of the Śūdra as envisaged in our present sources is in conformity with his religious condition described above. From the stories of creation laid down in *TS.* VII. 1. 1. 4-6 and *PB.* VI. 1. 6-11 is drawn the corollary quoted above, namely that the Śūdra is dependent on others and is charged with the duty of serving the rest. More emphatic is the testimony of the *AB.* passage (VII. 29) above referred to. There the Śūdra is described as *anyasya preṣyabḥ kāmottḥāpyo yathākānavadhyabḥ* ('the servant of another, to be removed at will, to be slain at will'). These striking phrases probably mean that the Śūdras formed a class of hereditary serfs without, however, any security of tenure and any rights of life and limb. As we have suggested elsewhere, we can only take the above passage, in its existing context and in the absence of any corroborative evidence, to refer to the political status of the Śūdra at his lowest.

Though the Śūdra's low status is sufficiently evident from the above texts, we can detect some signs of a reaction in his favour from a comparatively early period. In some instances an attempt is made to explain away older texts excluding the Śūdras from the sacrifice. Thus according to a *Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda* the rule forbidding a consecrated person to converse with a Śūdra for the

<sup>177</sup> Cf. *TS.* I. 8. 9. Also cf. *KŚS.* XV 3 36-46 which interprets the results of the offerings as ensuring to the sacrificer fame and freedom from disease.

time being applies only when the latter is guilty of some sin.<sup>178</sup> In other cases we find alternative views put forward in favour of admitting the Śūdras to the sacrifice. Thus Bharadvāja declares the four castes to be entitled to the establishment of the sacred fire according to one view, while not so entitled according to another.<sup>179</sup> Finally, we find sometimes a relatively high function assigned to the Śūdra at the important sacrifices. Thus *Kauśika-sūtra* XVII. 1. 16 directs a *mahāśūdra* to besprinkle the king at the higher type of consecration meant for the paramount ruler (*sārvabhauma*).

Ranking above the Śūdras in the social scale, although usually classed with them, are the two professional classes namely the carpenter (*takṣan*) and the chariotmaker (*rathakāra*).<sup>180</sup> That these two professions should be included in the list of victims at the *puruṣamedha*<sup>181</sup> where they are dedicated to Firmness and Dexterity, is not of much significance for our present purpose. The same remark applies to the inclusion in the *śatarudriya* section of the *Yajurveda*<sup>182</sup> of the *takṣan* and the *rathakāra* among the epithets of the god Rudrā. More importance attaches to the reference in *MS.* II 6. 5 and IV. 3. 8 which alone among the *Yajus Samhitā* texts includes the *takṣan* and the *rathakāra* in the list of *ratnins* at the *Ratnaha-vimṣi*, as well as in *Āp. ŚS.* XVIII. 10 which alone among the *Śrauta-sūtras* mentions them in the same list although alternatively with the *akṣāvāpa* ('thrower of dice') and the *govikarta* ('hunter'). For

178 The reference is to the passage in the Śātyāyana *Brāhmaṇa* quoted by Āpastamba according to a citation by the scholiast on *KŚS.* VII. 5. 7.

179 The passage which is quoted by Caland in his tr. of *Āp. ŚS.* V. 3. 19 n is as follows:—

*vidyate caturthasya varṇasyāgnyādheyaṃ ityēkam, na vidyate ityaparam.*

180 In *Āp. ŚS.* V. 3. 19 the *rathakāra* is taken for a *divja*, but this opinion does not appear to be shared by any other authority. See Caland's note on his tr. of the above text (*Das Śrītasūtra des Āpastamba*, 1-7 Buch, p. 136).

181 *VS.* XXX. 6. *TB.* III. 4. 2. 1.

182 *VS.* XVI. 17, *MS.* II. 9. 5, *KS.* XVII. 13 etc.

the rest, the high social and ritualistic position of the *takṣan* is suggested by *MS.* II. 4. 1 and *KS.* XII. 10 declaring his food as fit to be eaten, as also by *Ā. ŚS.* II 1. 13 making the *takṣan* called *upakruṣṭa* eligible to the establishment of the sacred fire. Similarly *TB.* I. 1. 4. 8 gives a separate *mantra* for kindling a sacred fire for the *rathakāra* as distinguished from that prescribed for a Brāhmaṇa, a Rājan and a Vaiśya. The distinctive position of the *rathakāra* is also indicated by the fact that according to *SB.* XIII. 4. 2. 17 the guardians of the sacrificial horse at the *Aśvamedha* during its period of wandering are directed to reside at the abode of a *rathakāra* of those sacrificers.

Included probably in the class of Sūdras were the people called *kārimāgadhas* ('māgadhas who were also artists or artisans'?) whose wives attended the *parivṛktā* at the *Aśvamedha* according to the late *Vādhūla-sūtras* Nos. 86 and 90 quoted above. Evidently they occupied a low social position equivalent to that of the *kṣattris* and *saṃgrahitṛs* with whom they are joined together. But otherwise we have no indication of their religious and civil status.

### C. *The status of the Vaiśya*

We now turn to the Vaiśyas, the most numerous class of people according to the legend of creation in *TS.* VII. 1. 1. 4-6 above quoted. In the texts cited before, we have found how the Vaiśyas are repeatedly joined with the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas in the acts as well as the formulae of the sacrificial ritual. How much the Vaiśya was held to enjoy equal social status with the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya is proved by a remarkable *Upaniṣad* text (*CU.* V. 10 7).<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless there is in other texts an unmistakable ten-

<sup>183</sup> In this passage birth as a Vaiśya is coupled with that as a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya as examples of good birth, while birth as a dog, a hog or a *caṇḍāla* is mentioned among examples of evil birth.

dency to reduce the Vaiśya's religious rights or even to cut them down altogether. Beginning with instances of the former kind, we may quote ŚB. VI. 6. 3. 12-13 which in connection with the rite of initiation for the *soma* sacrifice enjoins eleven kindling-sticks to be put in for one who is neither a Kṣatriya nor a *purohita*, while twelve sticks are put in for the Kṣatriya as well as the *purohita*. This gives the priestly author the opportunity for asserting his bold dictum that one who is not a Kṣatriya or a *purohita* is incomplete, while the Kṣatriya as well as the *purohita* is complete.<sup>184</sup> Another *Brāhmaṇa* text deliberately assigns to the Vaiśya an inferior part in the *Rājāsūya* ritual, justifying the same on the ground of his moral inferiority. We refer to ŚB. V. 1. 5. 28 which in connection with the ceremony of the chariot-race requires a Vaiśya or a Rājanya to hold a honey cup (or a cup of *surā*) which is ceremoniously sold for *Soma*. By this act, we are told, the priest imbues the sacrificer with truth, prosperity and light, while he smites the Vaiśya (the text is significantly silent about the Rājanya) with untruth, misery and darkness.<sup>185</sup> Of the tendency to exclude the Vaiśya from the sacrifice, we have an example in ŚB. II. 5. 2. 24 and IV. 5. 2. 16, where we are told in explanation of a certain rite that the Maruts called *viśas* of the gods are not eaters of oblations.<sup>186</sup> A more striking instance occurs in connection with the question of the Vaiśya's eligibility to the *Vājapeya*, one of the most important of the Vedic sacrifices. While Ś.Ś.S. no doubt preserving in this respect the original character of the sacrifice declares it to be open to the Brāhmaṇa, the Rājanya and the Vaiśya, all other ritual authorities

184. *akṣatriyasya vāpurohitasya vāsarvaṃ.....sarvaṃ tad yat kṣatriyo vā purohito vā.*

185. *satyamevaitacchriyaṃ jyotirayamāne dadhātyanṛtena pāpmanā tamasā vaiśyam vidhyati.* A similar passage occurs in TB. I. 3. 3. 7.

186. *abūtādo vai devānām maruto vi.*

reserve it only for the Brāhmaṇa and the Rājanya, or even only for the Rājan.<sup>187</sup>

As for the Vaiśya's civil status we have emphatic testimony to his political subjection to the ruling power in the numerous texts quoted above, concerning the mutual relations of *kṣatra* and *viś*. A somewhat complete list of the disabilities following from this subjection is given in the *AB.* text cited before, where the Vaiśya is declared to be *anyasya balikṛdanyasādyo yathākāmajyeyah* ('to be paying *bali* to another, to be eaten by another, to be oppressed at will'). According to our interpretation, this passage means, firstly that the Vaiśya was burdended with the *bali* tax, secondly that he had to make additional contributions in men and money in favour of those who were his 'eaters', and thirdly, that he had no security of personal rights. It is interesting to observe that the last two disabilities are predicated of the Vaiśya repeatedly in other texts. Thus we read in the *TS.* and *TB.* stories of cosmic creation given above that the Vaiśya by virtue of his creation from the middle of Prajāpati is to be eaten and further that the Brāhmaṇa and the Rājanya must live upon him.<sup>188</sup> Similarly *TB.* II. 2. 10. 1 ff., giving the story of Indra's acquisition of sovereignty over the gods, states that the divine king obtained the submission of his subjects who became food for him. He who knows this, so concludes the story, becomes eater of the subjects (*prajā*) by becoming Prajāpati as it were, and the subjects (*prajā*) become fit to be eaten. Other texts in our present sources connect the above-mentioned disability of the Vaiśya more directly with the sacrificial ritual. *SB.* I. 3. 2. 15 forbids a certain rite on the ground that the subjects (*prajā*) would thereby become separated from him, nor would there be either an eater or what is

<sup>187</sup> See *ŚSS.* XVI. 17. 1. 3; *Āp ŚS* XVIII. 1. 1; *VSS* XIII. 1. 1; *LSS.* VII. 11. 1; *KSS.* XIV. 1. Cf. *The Beginnings* etc. p. 283.

<sup>188</sup> The reference to the Brāhmaṇas is important as suggesting an otherwise unknown contribution made by the Vaiśyas in favour of the priestly class.

to be eaten. In the same connection another rite is recommended on the ground that thereby the people (*viśas*) pay *bali* to the *Kṣatriya*. Thereby, we are further told, the *Vaiśya* under the rule of the king becomes possessed of cattle, while the *Kṣatriya* whenever he likes says, 'Hullo, *Vaiśya*, just bring to me what thou hast stored away'. Similarly *ŚB.* VIII. 7. 2. 2 justifies a certain method of laying bricks for the fire-altar by saying that the priest thus places the *kṣatra* as the eater among the whole *viś*.<sup>189</sup> This relation of the *viś* to the *kṣatra* is well expressed in *ŚB.* VI. 1. 2. 25 which quotes a teacher *Tāṇḍya* as saying, in justification of a certain method of laying the bricks for the fire-altar, that the *kṣatriya* is the eater and the *viś* the food.<sup>190</sup> How firmly the notion was fixed in the ideas of our present authorities is illustrated by the title *viśāmattā* ('eater of the *viś*') applied to *Indra*, king of the gods, and his earthly counterpart in the proclamation formula at the Great Consecration ceremony of *Indra* according to *AB.* VIII. 12 & 17.

Insecure as were the *Vaiśya's* person and property, he yet possessed according to our present sources a certain measure of public rights. Whether he still had the right of attending the *sabhā* we do not know, but the balance of probability is against the same. That he was entitled to hold high office, however, there is no doubt. As we have seen, the *sūtas* and the *grāmanīs* may be proved directly by our texts and the *sthapati* proved so indirectly, to be of the *Vaiśya* class.

#### D. The status of the *Kṣatriya*.

In proceeding to consider the *Kṣatriya's* religious status in the Vedic Polity, we may well begin by recalling the texts cited above

<sup>189</sup> *Sarvasyām tadviśi kṣatramattāram dadhāti.*

<sup>190</sup> *attā vai kṣatriyo annam vit.* For a parallel passage, cf. *ŚB.* III. 3. 2. 8 where we read:

*annam vai kṣatriyasya vit* (the *viś* is the food of the *kṣatriya*).



about the fundamental differences between the attributes and functions of the teaching and sacrificing Brāhmaṇa and the ruling and fighting Rājanya. No wonder, then, that while the Kṣatriya is acknowledged to be equally entitled with the Brāhmaṇa to the *Śrauta* sacrifices, the higher privileges of the sacrifice should be sought to be restricted to the latter alone. Thus while *SB.* IV. 5. 2. 16 declares the Kṣatriyas along with the Brāhmaṇas to be entitled to the eating of oblations, *AB.* VII. 19 introduces its description of royal consecration with a striking legend in course of which we are told:—"The Brāhmaṇas are the off-spring of Prajāpati that eat the oblations, the Rājanya, the Vaiśya and the Sūdra are those that do not eat the oblations."<sup>191</sup> Proceeding with the legend, the *AB.* text explains why even now the sacrificer finds support in *brahma* and the Brāhmaṇas and why the Kṣatriya, now also as sacrificer having laid aside his own weapons, with the weapons of *brahma*, with the form of *brahma*, becoming *brahma*, goes to the sacrifice.<sup>192</sup> According to the above view, therefore, not only is the Kṣatriya disqualified for the eating of oblations, but he can only join the sacrifice in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa.

The above view of the Kṣatriya's religious disability is explained with a somewhat dramatic directness in the following chapters of *AB.* Referring firstly to the announcement of the consecration, *AB.* VII. 25 states that unlike the Brāhmaṇa the Kṣatriya should be announced with the *ṛsi* descent (*ārṣeya*) of his *purohita*. This rule is based on the fiction of the Kṣatriya's entering the sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇa's guise.<sup>192a</sup> Continuing in the same fashion, *AB.*

191 *etā vai prajā hutādo yad brāhmaṇā athaitā abutādo yadrājanyo vaiśyah sūdraḥ.*

192 In the above *brahma* is translated, as usual, as 'the holy power' by Keith.

192a "Having laid aside his own weapons, with the weapons of the holy power, with the form of the holy power, having become the holy power, he resorted to the sacrifice."

VII. 26 says that the sacrificer's share should not be eaten by the Kṣatriya, but handed over to the Brahman priest. For the Brahman priest is in the relation of the *purohita* to the Kṣatriya, the *purohita* is half the self of the Kṣatriya. Again, the Brahman is manifestly the sacrifice, for in the Brahman the whole sacrifice finds support, in the sacrifice the sacrificer. Finally *AB.* VII. 27-34 quotes a long story explaining why today even the *kṣatra* is deprived of Soma drinking. In this connexion the author, while explaining the peculiar sacrificial food (the fruits of *Nyagrodha*, *Udumbara*, *Aśvattha* and *Plakṣa* trees) prescribed for the Kṣatriya in place of soma, curds and water (respective drinks for the Brāhmaṇa, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra), reminds us of the king's assuming the form of a Brāhmaṇa during the sacrifice.<sup>192b</sup>

Turning to the Kṣatriya's civil status we may first point out how the *TS.* and *PB.* stories of universal creation quoted above, are made to yield the corollary that he is strong. The elements of the Kṣatriya's strength consisting in his unity, definiteness and activity as contrasted with the Vaiśya's multiplicity, indefiniteness and passivity are forcibly brought out in the texts quoted above bearing on the relation between the *kṣatra* and the *viś*. The Kṣatriya's status in the Vedic State is intimately connected with these concepts. In general the Kṣatriya is conceived, as shown above, as holding the *Viś* in political subjection. We have just pointed out what were the incidents of this subjection according to other texts. We shall presently attempt to analyse the nature and extent of the Kṣatriya's civil authority over the Brāhmaṇa.

It is in the *Yajus Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* that we get a somewhat detailed account of the divisions among the order of nobles. A general reference to such differences occurs in *TS.* II. 3.

<sup>192b</sup> "Mysteriously does the *kṣatriya* assume the form of the holy power, through the *purohita*, through the consecration, through the ancestral invocation."

4. 3 which introduces us to a rite whereby the priest leads the Rājanya who is low in rank to the top of his fellows.<sup>193</sup> We have a more specific reference in ŚB. XIII. 4. 2. 5 & 5. 2. 5-8 relating to the lists of keepers of the sacrificial horse and attendants of the Queens respectively at the *Āśvamedha*. We have shown elsewhere how the order of enumeration and (in the case of keepers of the sacrificial horse) the varying equipment as well, imply that the *rājaputras* (Princes) and *rājanyas* ('Knights') form the first and second order of nobles ranking above the *sūtas* and the *grāmanīs* who were of the Vaiśya caste.<sup>194</sup> References to the same two-fold division are found in other passages as well. Thus ŚB. XIII. 4. 2. 17 in course of a sharp admonition to the keepers of the sacrificial horse clearly distinguishes those who are *rāṣṭram rājāno' bhiṣecanīyāḥ* and those who are *arāṣṭramarājāno rājanyā viśo'nabhiṣecanīyāḥ*.<sup>195</sup> The *rāṣṭram rājāno' bhiṣecanīyāḥ* and the *arāṣṭramarājāno 'nabhiṣecanīyāḥ rājanyāḥ* of the above passage evidently correspond respectively to the *Rājaputras* and *Rājanyas* of the ŚB. passage just cited.<sup>196</sup> Assuming this identification to be correct, it would seem that the *Rājaputras* apparently enjoyed the royal title and shared (we are not

193 *sa evainamagram samānānām pari nayati.*

194 A difference of ranks even among *rājaputras* is hinted at in ŚB. XIII. 1. 6. 2. requiring the keepers of the sacrificial horse to be a hundred *rājaputras* "born in wedlock."

195 The passage in the original is as follows:—*ye ha vā etasyodṛcam gamiṣyanti rāṣṭram te bhaviṣyanti rājāno bhaviṣyanti nabhiṣecanīyā atha ye ha etasyodṛcam na gamiṣyanti arāṣṭram te bhaviṣyanti arājāno bhaviṣyanti rājanyā viśo'nabhiṣecanīyāḥ*. Eggeling translates it as follows:—"Those who go on to the end of this (horse-sacrifice) will become (sharers of) the royal power, they will become kings worthy of being consecrated; but those who do not go on to the end of this (sacrifice) will be excluded from royal power, they will not become kings, but nobles and peasants unworthy of being consecrated."

196 The *viśas* of the latter category presumably are to be identified with the *sūtas* and the *grāmanīs* whom ŚB. III. 4. 1. 7 and 2. 2. 18 declare to be *arājāno rājakartārāḥ*.

told how) the royal power and were held fit for the consecration. On the other hand the Rājanyas (in this approaching the status of the *sūtas* and *grāmanīs* of the inferior Vaiśya caste) had no royal title or share in the royal power and were disqualified for consecration.<sup>197</sup> This twofold distinction is preserved in ritual texts of later times dealing with the *Aśvamedha*. Among the *Sambhāras* ('accessories') of the *Aśvamedha* with which BŚS xv. 1 opens its description of the sacrifice are included 400 guardians of the horse, viz. 100 *talpya rājaputras* (princes born in wedlock), 100 *arājāna ugras* ('puissant seigneurs, qui cependant n'ont point droit à la consécration royale,' Dumont, *L'Aśvamedha*, p. 294), 100 *sūtas* and *grāmanīs* and 100 *ksattris* and *saṃgrahitṛs*. These groups of personages are mentioned as participating in subsequent rites of the *Aśvamedha* (Cf. BŚS. xv. 5, *ibid.*, 7 etc.). In BŚS. xv. 24-25, *ibid.*, 29-30, the attendants of the three Queens (*mahiṣī* or Chief Queen, *vāvāta* or favourite wife and *parivṛktī* or discarded wife) in connection with certain other rites are said to consist respectively of the wives of the *pratibitas* ('ksatriyas proches parents du roi,' Dumont, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-30 and 339) and of *arājānas* ('ksatriyas qui ne peuvent point devenir rois,' Dumont, *loc. cit.*), of those of *sūtas* and *grāmanīs* along with those of *ksattris* and *saṃgrahitṛs*. In another text (BŚS. xv. 3. etc.) the groups participating in the *Aśvamedha* rites consist of *rājagṛhas*, *sūtas* and *grāmanīs*, *ksattris* and *saṃ-*

197 In KB. XXVII. 6 we read:—"This is as if men should conduct the king, or his *rājamātra*, when wearied to an abode." According to VI. s.v. the term *rājamātra* here probably includes the whole class of persons who could be called *rājans* i.e. the *rājaputras* and the *rājanyas*. Now apart from the fact that the *rājanyas* are definitely described as *arājānaḥ* in the *Brāhmaṇa* text cited above, it may be doubted whether *rājamātra* is capable of such wide significance. In the above passage the use of *rājamātra* in the singular number and its evident approximation to the status of the king, suggest its high importance. Probably Keith's rendering as 'vice-gerent' in his translation of the KB. passage above cited is the correct one.

*grabhīṭṛs* as well as *kārus* ('artisans') and *viśas* ('common freemen'). In the above passage the *rājaputras*, *pratibitas* and *rājagrhas* probably stand for Princes as contrasted with *arājānas* who are ordinary nobles. In the text of the *Vādhūla Śrautasūtras* of the *Black Yajurveda* dealing with the *Aśvamedha*, we notice the same distinction. In Fragment No. 79 above mentioned, the order of enumeration and the difference of equipment prove that the *rājaputras* and the *arājans* form the first and second order of nobles respectively and rank above the *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs*, the *ksattrīs* and the *saṃgrabhīṭṛs* and so forth. With this agrees the fact that the *rājaputris*, the wives of *rājanyas* and the wives of *ksattrīs* and *saṃgrabhīṭṛs* as well as *kārimāgadhas* are mentioned in the same *sūtras* as attendants respectively of the *mahiṣī*, the *vāvāta* and the *parivṛkī*.

We may consider in the present context a remarkable *Brāhmaṇa* passage (*PB.* xx. 12. 5) referring to a specific princely order. There we read that because of the performance of a certain rite on behalf of Citraratha, among his descendants there is born only one *Kṣatrapati* ('lord of the nobility', Caland), 'as a dependent one the second'. This probably points to what was supposed to be the peculiar attribute of the Citraratha clan, namely that its chief exercised a definite supremacy over other chiefs. In the case of other clans apparently the clan-chieftain was only a *primus inter pares* among other chiefs.<sup>198</sup>

A word may be added here about the position of the king's retainers, a class known to the *Rgvedic* and *Atharvavedic* times under the names *upastis* and *ibhas*. In the *Yajus Samhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* texts the term *upasti* has lost its old technical significance and is used in the general sense of 'subject'.<sup>198a</sup> As regards the title *ibha*,

<sup>198</sup> It may be noted that an Aryan prince called Citraratha is known to *RV.* IV. 30. 18.

<sup>198a</sup> Cf. *TS.* VII. 2. 5. 4, VI. 5. 8. 2; *KS.* XXXI. 9, *TB.* III. 3. 5. 4

it still bears according to some scholars the old significance of 'retainer', while others take it to mean 'an elephant.'<sup>199</sup> Another term *saciva*, applied in *AB.* III. 20. 1. by the divine king Indra to the Maruts, has been supposed to bear the sense of the English *gesith* or the German *comes*.<sup>200</sup> To the above we may add an equally obscure reference in *SB.* V. 3. 4. 9 where in connection with the exposition of a certain *Rājasūya* rite we are told, 'And so there is in his kingdom even one belonging to some other kingdom and even that man from some other kingdom he absorbs'. To judge from the Anglo-Saxon analogy, this may refer to the practice of the king's drawing upon foreign residents for his band of retainers.<sup>201</sup>

#### E. *The status of the Brāhmaṇa.*

We turn finally to the question of the Brāhmaṇa's status in the Late Vedic State. Beginning with the Brāhmaṇa's religious rights, we have to observe that they are of course the class especially eligible to the sacrifice (*yajñīyāḥ*). The *AB.* text quoted immediately above would tend to make the privilege of performance of the sacrifice a monopoly of the Brāhmaṇas. But this extreme claim, it seems to us, is for the most part confined to one particular ritualistic school which does not in this respect represent the views of other schools.

Let us next consider the question of the Brāhmaṇa's civil status. We may refer in the first place to the remarkable doctrine of the Brāhmaṇa's divinity which our present sources appear to have developed out of the older *Rgvedic* and *Atharvavedic* conception of

199 On the above, see *VI.* s.v. *upasti* and *ibha*. Already in *AV.* III. 5. 7. (Paipp. recension) we find *upasti* applied to a Vaiśya, a Śūdra and an Ārya, no doubt in the general sense of a subject.

200. See above p. 111.

201 The passage in the original is as follows:—*api ha vāsyānyarāstriyo rāstre bhavatyapyanyarāstriyamavaharate*. On the constitution of the Anglo-Saxon *theod*, see Chadwick, *The Origin of the English Nation* (Cambridge. 1924) pp. 147-48.



his being a *protégé* of the gods.<sup>202</sup> The Brāhmaṇa, it was now openly declared, was a god, although of a lower order than the gods proper. To take a few examples, *TS.* I. 7. 3 declares the Brāhmaṇas to be the gods who receive offerings openly, in contrast with the gods proper who receive offerings secretly. According to *MS.* I. 4. 6 there are two classes of gods, viz. the gods proper who drink *soma* (*somapāh*) and eat sacrificial offerings (*hutādah*) and the Brāhmaṇas who do not drink *soma* (*asomapāh*) and do not eat offerings (*ahutādah*). *ŚB.* II. 2. 2. 6 and IV. 3. 4. 4 mention two classes of gods, viz. the gods proper and the human gods (Brāhmaṇas) who have studied and who teach the sacred lore. How inconsequential such formidable doctrines were in actual effect is illustrated by *GB.* II. 1. 6 which, after practically repeating *MS.* I. 4. 6 above cited, draws out the tame corollary that the sacrificer propitiates the oblation-eating gods by means of offerings and the human gods by the sacrificial fee.<sup>203</sup> The same contrast between high-sounding principles and modest claims is found in connection with the dictum of the Brāhmaṇa's independence of the king, which we come across in other texts. We have a negative illustration of this dictum in *ŚB.* V. 4. 3. 16-17 where in explanation of two *Rājasūya* texts we are told that thereby his kingship (*rājyam*) is rendered free (i.e. unopposed) over *kṣatra* as well as over *viś*. It is positively exemplified in *PB.* XVIII. 10. 8 which explains the use of appropriate chants at the consecration ceremony by saying that thereby he takes *brahma* from *kṣatra* and therefore the Brāhmaṇas are able to punish in return (i.e. 'as they are not subjected to the Kṣatriyas', Caland) their supporters (i.e. the nobles). It culminates in the famous maxim uttered by the priest in the presence of the assembled multitude at two succes-

202 See above, pp. 23, 44-5.

203 *dakṣiṇāvataiva yajñena yajata āhutibhireva devān hutādah prīnāti dakṣiṇā-bhirmanusyadevān.*

sive ceremonies of the *Rājasūya*,—a maxim tending to make the Brāhmaṇas a State within, or rather beyond, the State under the authority of King Soma.<sup>204</sup> Characteristically, however, the only corollary drawn from this dangerous doctrine is the immunity of the Brāhmaṇa's property.<sup>205</sup>

We may quote in the present context, as bearing upon the civil status of the Brāhmaṇas, the opening words of the legend of Creation in one of the Older *Upaniṣads*. In *BU. I. 4. 11-14* we read:—

“Verily in the beginning there was Brahman, one only. That, being one, was not strong enough. It created still further the most excellent *Kṣatra*..... Therefore there is nothing beyond the *Kṣatra* and therefore at the *Rājasūya* sacrifice the Brāhmaṇa sits down below the Kṣatriya. He confers the glory on the Kṣatriya alone. But *Brahma* is nevertheless the birthplace of the *Kṣatra*. Therefore though a king is exalted, he sits down at the end (of the sacrifice) below the Brāhmaṇa as his birthplace. He who injures him injures his own birthplace. He becomes worse, because he has injured one better than himself.”

We are not concerned to note how the above text explains away an admitted instance of the Brāhmaṇa's inferiority so as to maintain his social precedence over the Kṣatriya. What is relevant to

204 The formula which is uttered by the priest in the concluding stage of the *Devasū* offerings and again at the besprinkling ceremony (*VS. IX. 40* and *X. 18*) or else at the ceremony of the preparation of the sacred waters (*TS. I. 8. 10* and *12; KS. XV. 7; MS. II. 6. 9*) is as follows:—“This is your king, O ye people, [with variants]; Soma is the king of us, Brāhmaṇas’.

205 Cf. *SB. V. 3. 3. 12* and *4. 2. 3*:—“He thereby causes everything here to be food for him (the king): the Brāhmaṇa alone he excepts: therefore the Brāhmaṇa is not to be fed upon, for he has Soma for his king.” Also cf. *ibid IX. 4. 3. 16*:—“He thereby excludes the Brāhmaṇas (from the power of the king) and makes them such as are not to be fed upon (by the king).”

notice in this connection is that while declaring *brahma* to be the birthplace of *ṛṣatra* and to be better than the *ṛṣatra*, it is content to assert only the immunity of the Brāhmaṇa's person.

In the series of texts quoted above, it would seem, the privileges claimed for the Brāhmaṇas, notwithstanding the high pretensions made on their behalf, are mostly of an elementary character. They comprise the receipt of gifts, social precedence and the immunity of person and property. With these we may compare the neat summary in *ŚB.* XI. 5. 7. 1 which declares the Brāhmaṇa's fourfold privilege to be *arcā* (honour) *dāna* (gift), *ajyeyatā* (immunity from oppression) and *avadhyatā* (immunity from being slain), matching his four duties, viz. Brahmanical descent, a befitting deportment, fame and the perfecting of the people. Leaving aside the other privileges, we may quote here a number of texts giving concrete instances of the Brāhmaṇa's claim to personal and proprietary rights. We begin with a *Brāhmaṇa* text expressly excluding the property (*vitta*) of the Brāhmaṇas from the scope of sacrificial fees at the two most expensive of the *Śrauta* sacrifices, viz. the *Purusa-medha* and the *Sarvamedha*.<sup>206</sup> Next we may mention a striking passage of the *Yajurveda* giving, in the form of a boon granted by the gods to a progenitor of the Brāhmaṇas, a graduated scale of penalties for injuring a Brāhmaṇa's reputation and person.<sup>207</sup> In this passage,

206 Cf. *ŚB.* XIII. 6. 2. 18:—What there is towards the middle of the kingdom, other than the land [*bhūmi*] and the property of the Brāhmaṇa [*Brāhmaṇasya vittam*], but including the men, of that the eastern quarter belongs to the *Hotr*, the southern to the *Brahman*, the western to the *Adhvaryu* and the northern to the *Udgātṛ*. *ŚB.* XIII. 7. 1. 13, referring to the *Sarvamedha*, uses the same phrase with the addition of 'and land' to the words 'the men.'

207 Cf. *TS.* II. 6. 10. 1-2:—"The gods could not find any one to utter the call *svagā* at the sacrifice. They spoke to *Samyu Bārhaspatya*, 'Perform the *svagā* call at this sacrifice for us.' He said, 'Let me choose a boon..... What is to belong to my offspring?' 'Him who reviles him, he shall fine with a hundred: him who strikes him, he shall fine with a thousand: he who draws blood from him, shall

censuring and assaulting a Brāhmaṇa are visited with fines of a hundred and a thousand cows respectively, while what may be called a grievous hurt to a Brāhmaṇa is thought to be so serious an offence as to be punishable with the most formidable spiritual penalties. Censuring a Brāhmaṇa is mentioned with disapproval in other texts.<sup>208</sup> Elsewhere slaying a Brāhmaṇa is regarded as a most heinous offence.<sup>209</sup> So much so that it is expiable only by the *Aśvamedha*, whose performer 'reduces all sin' and extinguishes all evil-doing.<sup>210</sup> We may refer finally to *ŚB.* XIII 1. 5. 4 hinting darkly at the dangerous consequence of the king's oppressing a Brāhmaṇa.<sup>211</sup>

It will be seen from the above that the passages in our present sources bearing directly on the subject claim for the Brāhmaṇa for the most part no more than what may be called private rights.<sup>211a</sup> Elsewhere, however, we have hints pointing to a few public rights belonging to this order. From this stand-point the above-quoted passages proclaiming the joint sovereignty of *brahma* and *ksatra* over the *viś*, or even the superiority of the *brahma* to the *ksatra*, do not appear to be of much significance. For no concrete rights are associated with the Brāhmaṇas in these texts. A direct reference to the Brāhmaṇa's preferential treatment in the law-courts

not behold the world of the *Pitrs* for as many years as are the grains of dust which the blood in its fall seizes upon.'"

208 Cf. *KB.* VI. 4 drawing from a legend of Prajāpati the lesson that 'one should not speak ill of a Brāhmaṇa.'

209 Cf. *TS.* VI. 5. 10. 2:— "(A man) is slayer of a Brāhmaṇa (through slaying) an embryo which has not been discriminated." Also cf. *SB.* XIII 3. 5. 3:— "Doubtless, a murder other than the slaying of a Brāhmaṇa is no murder; but that—to wit, the slaying of a Brāhmaṇa, is manifestly murder."

210 See *SB.* XIII. 3. 1. 1; 5. 4. 1; *TĀ.* X. 38.

211 The passage is as follows:— "And when the king chooses, he may oppress (despoil) the Brāhmaṇa, but he will fare the worse (or, become the poorer) for it."

211a The claim of exemption from the State burdens (above p. 146), may, however, be taken to refer to a public right.

has been traced in a somewhat obscure text of the *Yajurveda*,<sup>212</sup> while a late Vedic commentary would have us believe that the Brāhmaṇa's house was regarded as a sanctuary against the king's officers.<sup>212a</sup> More positive is the testimony of *TS.* VII. 1. 8 quoted above proving that the Brāhmaṇa was entitled to become a member of the *sabhā* (the king's council and court). With this we may mention the significant fact that the Brahman priest occupies the first place in all the lists of *ratnins* sharing in 'the Jewel-offering ceremony' at the *Rājasūya*, the *ŚB.* alone placing the *purohita* (his substitute) as second in the list immediately after the *senāni*.<sup>213</sup> To the *Brāhmaṇa* order, again, belongs the office of the *purohita* whose function as the protector of the realm has been traced back by us to the *Rgvedic* times and will be fully dealt with presently.

We have thus far sought to summarise the rights belonging to the Brāhmaṇas in the late Vedic State according to our present authorities. It now remains for us to state that the exercise of these rights was subject to admitted limitations. That the ignorant Brāhmaṇa was excluded from the privileges of his order is illustrated by such passages as *ŚB.* XIII. 4. 2. 17 relating to the *Aśvamedha*.

212 The passage (*TS.* II. 5. 11. 9) reads:—*yad brāhmaṇaścābrāhmaṇaśca praśnameyātām brāhmaṇāyādhibrūyāt*. Taking *adhibrū* in this passage to mean 'decide in favour of' rather than 'speak in favour of' the Brāhmaṇa, Keith makes it mean that in case of litigation between a Brāhmaṇa and non-Brāhmaṇa the suit should be decided in favour of the former.

212a Explaining *ŚB.* V. 3. 1. 13 which requires the king to banish from his dominions his discarded wife at the end of the *Ratnahavīṃsi* ceremony, the commentator Karka (on *KSS.* XV. 67) says that she should betake herself to a Brāhmaṇa's house where the king has no power (*tataścāsau brāhmaṇagrham praviśati tatra rājño na svāmyam*).

213 For references see the chart opp. p. 249 in *The Beginnings* etc. It deserves to be remarked that *MS.* IV. 3. 8 justifying the Brāhmaṇa's inclusion among the *ratnins* says that he thereby makes the kingdom (*rāṣṭra*) a follower of *brahma*.



Here we read that the guardians of the sacrificial horse may despoil the Brāhmaṇa ignorant of the *Aśvamedha*, "for the *Aśvamedha* is everything, and he who, whilst being a Brāhmaṇa, knows naught of the *Aśvamedha*, knows naught of anything, he is not a Brāhmaṇa and as such liable to be despoiled". Of greater significance is the reference to the *AB.* text (VII. 29) quoted above, where the Brāhmaṇa is characterised, among other things, as *yathākāma-prayāpyah*. Although apparently unsupported by other Vedic texts, this striking phrase probably refers to the king's (or the great noble's) claim to send for the Brāhmaṇa as an officiating priest or in some similar capacity.<sup>214</sup> Finally we may quote a few remarkable texts implying the oppression of Brāhmaṇas by Rājanyas to be so common as to make the latter a by-word of contempt. Thus in a *Yajurveda* passage we read that the *Agnihotra* sacrifice should not be performed for a Rājanya, since he does much that is unworthy of sacrifice, practises much impurity and oppresses overmuch the Brāhmaṇas.<sup>215</sup> A *Bāhmana* passage more generally charges the Rājanya with practising and speaking much falsehood, with oppression of the Brāhmaṇas and so forth.<sup>216</sup>

214 The above phrase is taken by Muir, Haug and Weber in the active sense as 'moving at will.' Rightly rejecting this interpretation, the authors of *VI. s.v. varṇa*, interpret it in the causative sense as meaning 'to be moved at will'. This translation, besides conforming to grammar, suits the context which requires a deprecatory reference to the Brāhmaṇas. But a more accurate rendering is suggested by Monier-Williams' Dictionary, s.v. *prayā* where the causative *prayāpayati* is explained as meaning 'to cause to set out'. *Yathākāmaprayāpyah* would then mean 'to be made out to set out at will'. The other phrases applied to the Brāhmaṇa in the above-quoted *AB.* text are *ādāyī*, *āpāyī*, *āvasāyī*, which Keith translates as 'an acceptor of gifts, a drinker of soma, a seeker of livelihood.'

215 See *MS.* I. 8. 7:—*bahu vā eṣo'yajñīyamamedhyam caratyattyanannam jināti brāhmaṇam tasmādrājanyasyāgnihotramahotavyam*.

216 See *TB.* I. 7. 2. 6:—*bahu vā rajanyo'nṛtam karoti upajāmyai harate jināti brāhmaṇam vadatyānṛtam* etc.



F. *The position of the purohita.*

No account of the Brāhmaṇa's position in the late Vedic State will be complete without some reference to the *purohita*, the domestic priest of the king or the great noble. We have seen how not only is the office of the *purohita* known to the *RV*, but he is held even there to be a helpful adjunct of the king and virtually to be "a protector of the realm." In the present period, no doubt largely because of the elaboration of the Vedic sacrificial ritual, the *purohita's* office attains still greater importance. Indicative of our authors' sense of the universality of this institution is the fact that they conceive a pair of *purohitas* of the Asuras (Marka and Śaṇḍa) matching the old Vedic pair of *purohitas* of the Devas, viz. Agni and Brhaspati (or Brahmanaspati).<sup>217</sup> The high position of the *purohita* is well expressed in *SB.* II. 4. 4. 8,<sup>218</sup> and his great prosperity in *PB.* XIII 9. 27 and XIV. 9. 38.<sup>219</sup> Significant, again, of the importance of the *purohita's* office is the fact that special sacrifices like the *Vājapeya* and the *Brhaspatisava* are now prescribed for one desirous of this honour.<sup>220</sup> In the course of their explanation of these sacrificial ceremonies our authorities from

217 References to Marka or Śaṇḍa or both occur in *TS.* I. 4. 9, VI. 4. 10, *MS.* IV. 6. 3; *VS.* VIII. 12-13, 16-17; *SB.* IV. 2. 1. 4. *TB.* I. 1. 5, *AB.* VI. 4. 10. 1.

218 "A very high position is held by him who is *purohita* in one kingdom: how much higher, then, is the position of the *purohita* of two kingdoms."

219 *annam vai brahmaṇaḥ purodhāḥ* ("The *purohita's* office is the Brāhmaṇa's food").

220 According to almost all ritual authorities the *Vājapeya* is a preliminary sacrifice to be followed in due course by the *Brhaspatisava* which a Brāhmaṇa performs, when raised to the dignity of a *purohita*. As an exception *SB.* V. 2. 1: 19 identifies the *Vājapeya* with the *Brhaspatisava*, while *KSS.* XIV 1.2 enjoins the performer of the *Vājapeya* to celebrate the *Brhaspatisava* for a fortnight before and a fortnight after the same sacrifice. For special rites to be performed by one who is desirous of the *purohita's* office (*purodhākāma*): see *PB.* XV. 4. 8 and XIX. 17.7 etc.

time to time refer generally to the *purohita's* public functions. Thus a formula of the *Vājapeya* (VS. IX. 23; TS. I. 7. 10 etc.) seems to convey the sacrificer's wish of watching over the kingdom as the *purohita*.<sup>221</sup> In TS. II. 1. 2. 9 prescribing a rite for one who has a dispute for a *purohitaship* we are told that 'with brilliance, with the Brahman he siezes on either side the kingdom and forthwith appropriates it; they choose him as *purohita*'.<sup>222</sup>

We may next refer to other passages in our present sources emphasizing the indispensability of the *purohita* for the king. In AB. VII. 25 we are told that the king's consecration is to be announced with the ṛṣi descent (*ārṣeya*) of his *purohita*, while AB. VII. 26 requires the Kṣatriya at the same ceremony to hand over the sacrificer's share to the Brahman priest who is in the relation of the *purohita* to the king. Justifying this last rule, the text lays down the remarkable dictum that 'the *purohita* is half the self of the Kṣatriya'.<sup>223</sup> The most impressive statement of the *purohita's* relation to the king and the kingdom occurs in the concluding chapters (VIII. 24 ff.) of AB. There we read that the king must appoint a *purohita* for his sacrifices, for the gods eat not the food of a king without a *purohita*. The king wins (or loses) heaven, the lordly power (*kṣatra*), might, the kingdom and the people, according as he does (or does not) appease the *purohita*, his wife and his son, for they are the three sacred fires. The king who has for his *purohita* to guard the kingdom a *Brāhmaṇa* with this

221 *vayam rāstre jāgriyāya purohitāḥ* in the original. Eggeling in connexion with SB. V. 2. 2. 5 translates the VS. text as follows:—'May we be wakeful in the kingdom, placed in the front, hail.' This ignores the technical sense of *purohitāḥ*. But see Keith's tr. of the corresponding TS. text.

222 Similarly MS. II. 1. 4, prescribing a certain offering to Soma and Indra for one desirous of the *purohita's* office, says that Soma gives him the kingdom (*so'smā anapadosyam rāstram prayacchati*).

223 *ardhātmā ha vā eṣa kṣatriyasya yat purohitāḥ*.

knowledge wins full life, while he conquers *ḥṣatra* by *ḥṣatra* and his people are in harmony with him, 'with one aspect and one mind.' These passages evidently are meant to impress upon the king the paramount need of appointing a *purohita* and treating him with respect. But they serve incidentally, as in the use of the striking phrase *rāṣṭragopa* ('protector of the realm'), to remind us of the importance of the *purohita*'s public functions. In the same context *AB. VIII. 27* describes the ceremony of the *purohita*'s selection by the king. As Weber pointed out long ago, the formula uttered on this occasion is modelled exactly on the lines of that used in the marriage ceremony.<sup>224</sup> This of course points to the indissoluble bond uniting the king and his *purohita*. It is to be observed that the same formula hints once more at the *purohita*'s function of securing the safety and prosperity of the kingdom.<sup>225</sup>

We have a concrete illustration of the public importance of the *purohita*'s office in the parts assigned to him by our authorities at various ceremonies of the *Rājasūya*. *ŚB. V. 3. 1. 1-2* mentions the *purohita*, as we have observed elsewhere, immediately after the *senāni* in the list of *ratnins* participating in the Jewel-offering ceremony. The *purohita* figures also in the ceremony of passing round of the sacrificial sword in succession, both according to the White and the Black Yajus texts.<sup>226</sup>

We may next mention a number of stories which enable us, so far as they go, to check the above account of the *purohita*'s standing

224 Cf. the following:—

"*bhūb, bhūbbhah, svar, om*

I am that, thou art this; thou art this, I am that; I am the sky, thou art the earth: I am the *Sāman*, thou the *Ṛc*. Let us two unite."

225 Cf. the words:—

"In this kingdom I make prosperity to dwell.

O gods, for the protection of the kingdom, to win security from danger.

Let the waters for the foot-washing burn away my foe."

226 For references and a full description, see *The Beginnings* etc. pp. 270-71.

and functions in the Late Vedic State. That the *purohita* was credited with the power of multiplying the people through divine interference is suggested by a story which occurs in *TS.* III. 5. 2. and *KS.* XXXVII. 17 and with a slight change in *PB.* XV. 5. 24. It tells us how the people having Vasīṣṭha as their *purohita* were multiplied by the favour of God Indra by Vasīṣṭha's intercession. In other stories we are told how the kings were saved from their enemies by the intervention of their *purohitas*. Thus *PB.* XV. 3. 7 tells us how Divodāsa, being hemmed in by his enemies, sought the help of his *purohita* Bharadvāja, who saved him by chanting the appropriate *Sāman*. Similarly *JB.* III. 244-247, (= Caland, *Das Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl*, No. 205) states how Kṣatra, son of Pratardana, being hemmed in by ten kings, asked the help of Bharadvāja, his *purohita*. The chanting of the appropriate *Sāman* by the priest led to the appearance of God Indra in human form and his miraculous dispersal of the king's enemies.<sup>227</sup> From other accounts it appears that the *purohita's* functions soared far above the mere protection against the king's enemies. *AB.* VIII. 21-23 gives a long list of kings who were consecrated with the *mahābhīṣeka* of Indra by their *purohitas*, with the result that they "went round the earth completely, winning on every side and offered the horse in sacrifice."

But great as were the *purohita's* services in securing for his royal patron immunity from attack as well as universal dominion, he had sometimes to suffer ill-treatment at the hands of the king. How a *purohita* proclaimed the Great Consecration of Indra to a

<sup>227</sup> In the late *Bṛhaddevatā* V. 124-138 we have the similar story of the two kings Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna and Prastoka, son of Sṛñjaya, who being defeated by the Vāraśikhas sought the help of the sage Bharadvāja as *purohita*. The sage directed his son to consecrate the implements of war and himself praised Indra with the result that the Vāraśikhas were slain.

certain high personage and thereby enabled him, though not a king, to make universal conquest and how the latter sought afterwards to cheat the former of his dues, is told in *AB.* VIII. 23. In the sequel the wrong-doer of course was deprived of his strength by the angry priest and was killed by a king.<sup>228</sup> This story may be taken to show what good grounds existed for the remarkable oath (*AB.* VII. 15) of non-injury to the *purohita* which the Kṣatriya sacrificer was required to take in a strikingly formal style and under terrible penalties at the beginning of the sacrifice.<sup>229</sup> More generally we may find in the above story an apt comment on the text enjoining the king to treat his *purohita* with respect.<sup>230</sup> Another story tells us of a quarrel between the *Ikṣvāku* king Tryarūṇa Traivṛṣṇa and his *purohita* Vṛṣa, son of Jana. The quarrel arose over the question of responsibility for the death of a Brāhmaṇa

228 The story is given below in Keith's translation. "This great consecration of Indra Vāsiṣṭha Sātyahavya proclaimed to Atyarāti Jānamtapi. Therefore Atyarāti Jānamtapi, though not a king, through his knowledge went round the earth completely conquering on every side. Vāsiṣṭha Sātyahavya said, 'Thou hast conquered entirely the earth on every side: do thou make me great.' Then said Atyarāti Jānamtapi 'When I conquer.' O Brāhmaṇa, the Uttara Kurus, then thou wouldst be the king of the earth, and I would be thy general.' Vāsiṣṭha Sātyahavya replied, 'That is a place of the gods: no mortal man may conquer it. Thou hast been false to me: therefore I take this from thee.' Then Amitratapana Śuṣmīṇa Saibya, a King, slew Atyarāti Jānamtapi, whose strength had been taken away and who had lost his power."

229 The oath, which is first proposed by the priest, is afterwards sworn 'with faith' by the Kṣatriya in the following words: "From the night of my birth to that of my death, for the space between these two, my sacrifice and my gifts, my peace, my good deeds, my life and my offspring mayest thou take, if I play thee false."

230 The description of the lower grade of consecration aptly called by the commentator Keśava *Laghu Abhiṣeka* in the late *Kauśika Sūtra* of the *AV.* reflects a more friendly feeling between the king and his *purohita*. Here the Brāhmaṇa says, "Common to us be the good deeds and common the evil deeds." to which the king replies, 'Let evil deeds belong to him who does them, but the good deeds be common to us'."



boy who was run over by the king's chariot, while he was driving along with his *purohita* holding the reins. In the sequel the *purohita* was adjudged guilty by the *Ikṣvākus* and he took his revenge by afflicting the people until he was placated.<sup>231</sup> Finally, we may refer to the story<sup>232</sup> of king Kutsa, son of Uru, and his *purohita* Upagu son of Suśravas, which shows how a *purohita* actually defied his king's wishes and was punished with death for his treason.

We have a remarkable exhibition of priestly ambition in the latest Vedic phase in some late ritualistic texts relating to the *Aśva-medha*. According to *Āp. ŚS.* xx. 2. 12 and 3. 1-2, the royal sacrificer at an early stage of the sacrifice grants the kingdom to the Adhvaryu with the words, 'O Brāhmaṇas and Rājans, this Adhvaryu is your king. The respect which is offered to me should be granted by you to him. What he commands you, should be taken by you as a command.' The Adhvaryu becomes a king for the period of the sacrifice.<sup>232a</sup> According to the parallel text of *BŚS.* xv. 4, the

231 This story occurs in two versions viz:—(1) *Śātyāyana Brāhmaṇa* quoted by Sāyaṇa and Veṅkatamādhava on *RV.* V. 2. 1. and (2) *JB.* III. 94-96, Caland, *Das Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl* no. 180. For the text of the former version see Batakriṣṇa Ghosh, *Collection of the Fragments of lost Brāhmaṇas*, (Calcutta, 1935), pp. 41-45. For the text and tr. of the latter version see Oertel, *JAOS.* XVIII. pp. 21-24 and Caland, *loc. cit.* The same story occurs in a shorter version in *PB.* XIII. 3. 12 and *Bṛhaddevatā* V. 14 ff.

232 This story also occurs in two versions viz:—*PB.* XIV. 6. 8 and *JB.* III. 198-201 (=Das Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl no. 198). In the former version the *purohita* offers sacrifice to Indra in spite of the king's known aversion to that god and the king punishes him by cutting his head. In the latter version the king issues a general order that no one in his realm (*iśā*) should offer sacrifice on pain of being deprived of his possessions. The *purohita* thrice offered sacrifice to Indra and was deprived of his possessions as many times. Again offering sacrifice to Indra, he was smashed to pieces by the angry king, only to be revived by Indra.

232a The text in the original is as follows:—*Adhvaryuṃ rājyāya paridādāti brāhmaṇā rājānaścāyaṃ v'adhvaryū rājā yā mamāpacitih sā va etasmin yadva eṣa karoti tadvaḥ kṛtamasaditi yāvadyajñamadhvaryū rājā bhavati.* It is thus translated by Caland (*Das Śrantasūtra des Āpastamba*):—"Er (nl. der Opferveranstalter



persons who are consecrators of *kṣattris* consecrate the Adhvaryu. 'O Brāhmaṇas and Rājans,' says the royal sacrificer, 'the Adhvaryu will be the king for these two years. Obey him. He who will not obey him will have all his possessions confiscated.' And the Adhvaryu becomes king for these two years, while the other (i.e. the king) is called a sacrificer.<sup>232b</sup> It is difficult to realise how a mere priest could act as a king even for a short time. But the mandate put into the king's mouth in both the above texts, coupled with the formal grant of sovereignty in the first passage and the formal consecration together with the changed title of the royal sacrificer in the second one, marks a desperate attempt of the priest to take advantage of his position to exercise temporal power even for a while.<sup>232c</sup>

### General remarks.

At the end of this brief survey of the civil and religious status of component classes of the Late Vedic State, we may ask whether this points to any important social and economic revolution as compared with earlier times. A definite answer to this question is suggested by Prof. Keith<sup>233</sup> in so far as the status of the Vaiśya and the Śūdra in relation to the other classes is concerned. Reconstructing the history of the period of the later *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the older *Upanisads*, he thinks that while the Vaiśyas approxi-

übergibt dem Adhvaryu die Regierung, indem er spricht: "Ihr Brahmanen und Baronen, dieser Adhvaryu sei euer König: die Ehrenerweisung, die mir zukommt, die sollt ihr diesem bezeugen, Was dieser euch anschafft (befiehlt), das soll, euch als angeschafft (befohlen) gelten." According to BSS. (xv. 38) the *Āśvamedha* lasts for three years.

232b For translation of the above passage, see P.-E. Dumont, *L'Āśvamedha*, p. 298.

232c Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, p. 60 n. quotes *Āp. ŚS.* xviii. 1. 1 and 8. 22 as referring to a similar ceremony. But the first passage has no bearing on the present subject, while the second reference is a slip.

233 *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, pp. 128-9.

mated to the position of tenants holding their lands under the nobles, the Śūdras approached more and more the level to which the humbler freeman was being reduced. To this he finds an interesting parallel in the history of Anglo-Saxon England where the ordinary freeman is found gradually to fall into dependence on his superiors, while the slave as gradually acquires the position of a serf. It may, however, be doubted whether the admitted facts of Vedic public life justify such a sweeping conclusion. That the king used to grant settlement with or without the approval of the people is evident from ŚB. VIII. 1. 7. 3. 4. quoted above. But there is nothing to indicate that this was done on any considerable scale in favour of the nobles, or even of the king's retainers. Again, it seems somewhat doubtful whether the striking phrases *anyasya balikṛdanyasyādyo yathākāmajyeyah* applied to the Vaiśya in AB. VII. 29 quoted above, refer, as Prof. Keith thinks, to the king's conferment of his right to receive food from the common people upon the nobles and the consequent rise of a class of aristocratic landholders holding the Vaiśyas as tenants under them. For the text itself is completely silent about the Vaiśya's dependence upon the nobles as distinguished from the king. There may have been indeed numerous unrecorded instances of subjection of whole non-Aryan tribes to the Aryans, resulting in the assignment of villages with their inhabitants to the king and the nobles and the consequent creation of a class of Śūdra serfs. It is, however, certain that the AB. text (VII. 29) cited above distinguishes clearly between the status of the Vaiśya and of the Śūdra. The Śūdra was a slave or serf (*anyasya preṣyah*), while the Vaiśya by contrast was evidently a freeman paying only the *bali* tax to another (*anyasya balikṛt*). Again, the Śūdra was evidently a tenant-at-will removeable at any time from his holding (*kāmotthāpyah*) unlike the Vaiśya who was simply burdened with additional contributions payable to others (*anyasyā-*

*dyah*). In the next place, the Sūdra apparently had as yet no wergeld (*yathākāmavadhyah*), while the Vaiśya by contrast evidently possessed one, though without security of personal rights (*yathākāmajyeyah*). Clearly, therefore, the Sūdra was a slave or serf without wergeld and security of tenure. On the other hand the Vaiśya was a freeman, though liable to constant encroachment on his personal and proprietary rights and charged with financial and other burdens. While the direct evidence for a fundamental transformation in the status of the Vaiśya and the Sūdra in late Vedic times is so unconvincing, the indirect evidence is not less inconclusive. In the objective pictures of social life presented in the early Buddhist literature which cannot be far distant from the period we are at present considering, we find the village lands as a rule to be in possession of peasant-proprietors, although large estates cultivated by slave or serf labour are not unknown.<sup>234</sup>

In so far as the Brāhmaṇas are concerned, we have seen how notwithstanding the extravagant pretensions advanced on their behalf, their actual claims are principally confined to the assertion of private rights of person and property. What is more, the authorities themselves bear direct witness to the grave limitations to which even these elementary rights were subject in actual practice. Even the *purohita*, who was expected to be cherished and honoured by the king and was called half the self of the Kṣatriya, could be made to suffer unjustly at the king's hands. In attempting a possible explanation of this striking phenomenon, we may first refer to the weak organization of the Brāhmaṇical order. Bound together as it was by the ties of caste pride and the observance of common social and religious practices, it was wanting in the strength of an organised Church. Lacking a corporate body with a

<sup>234</sup> Cf. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, pp. 198, 205.

permanent head and unsupported by permanent contributions from the people, it could present no united front even for the vindication of personal rights of its members. The Brāhmanical order, again, by deliberately cutting itself off from contact with the ruling and fighting classes, was deprived of the strength arising from the infusion of fresh blood. Among other causes tending to produce the same result, we may mention the mentality of the Brāhmaṇas whose wordly ambitions at this period were mostly confined to the receipt of gifts, the honour of social precedence and the like, and seldom, if at all, soared towards dominion.<sup>235</sup>

<sup>235</sup> The temporary kingship of the *Adhvaryu* at the *Aśvamedha*, according to the Āp. ŚS and BŚS texts quoted above, is evidently altogether exceptional.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have attempted in the foregoing pages to trace, as far as the somewhat one-sided and imperfect material at our disposal would permit, the rise and development of the political institutions of the Indo-Aryans from the oldest recorded times to their full maturity. It will now be our task to sum up the leading characteristics of these institutions and draw some general conclusions from the same.

The Vedic Indians were divided in early times into a number of tribes ruled by kings. The tribe (*jana*) consisted of a number of classes or cantons (*viśas* in the narrower sense), which were further subdivided into families (*kulas*). The king was assisted by tribal assemblies (*sabhās* and *samitis*). Though we do not know whether the kinship groups underlay the constitution of the Assemblies, it appears that the *viś* was a fighting unit similar to the fighting groups of kinsmen known to Ancient Germany or Homeric Greece.<sup>1</sup> As the tribes settled down in the land, the territorial State arose at least among the more advanced peoples in place of the old tribal polity. The king became the ruler not only of the *viś*, but also of the *rāṣṭra*. In place of the fighting *viś* we find reference to divisions of the army arranged apparently on purely military lines. To the same period, again, we have to refer not only the absorption of the smaller States into larger ones but also the more frequent rise of overlordships which, fleeting and transitory as they doubtless were, anticipated the permanent types of empire known to later times.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 4-6.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 50-51, 53-54.



Monarchy was fixed from first to last as the standard, almost universal, type of polity known to the Indo-Aryans. As in the parallel case of the Ancient Teutons, its permanence among the Vedic Indians is probably to be attributed to its importance as a symbol of unity in the large territorial State. Amid the uncertainties of our records we can probably distinguish three distinct kinds of monarchy in early Vedic times. These were, firstly, hereditary monarchy, secondly, elective monarchy and thirdly, what may be called dynastic government.<sup>3</sup> In the late Vedic period the first appears to have been established as the regular type, while the second seems to have gone out of use and the third was continued perhaps on a limited scale.<sup>3a</sup> By the later Vedic period, royal succession by primogeniture had become so much the normal rule that its violation was regarded as a dereliction of Duty (*dharmavyatikrama*).<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile if we are to trust an almost unique *AB*. text, a regional division of monarchical constitutions had been established in the central zone of Vedic culture and its surrounding tracts. Not only, however, are the distinctive titles applied to these regional constitutions tantalizingly obscure, but the division itself appears to be contradicted by other texts.<sup>5</sup>

The Vedic kingship was from the first associated with great dignity and prosperity as well as high authority.<sup>6</sup> The later texts not only stress the weakness of the people (*viś*) as compared with the ruling power (*kṣātra*), but repeatedly inculcate the subjection of the former to the latter.<sup>7</sup> Probably to emphasise this last principle, it was sometimes held especially in later times that the king was somewhat of a deity and his rule was based upon his quasi-divinity and

3 See above, pp. 16-18.

4 See above, p. 82.

6 See above, pp. 9-12.

3a See above, pp. 80-82.

5 See above, pp. 85-86.

7 See above, pp. 67-71.



Divine Right.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless it is a fundamental fact that the Vedic king from first to last never claimed divine descent.<sup>9</sup> To his other attributes the king added in later times his moral pre-eminence which he shared, according to the ideas of the priestly authors, with the Brāhmaṇa.<sup>10</sup> But he had no claim to the ownership of the soil except in so far as he sometimes used to dispose of the lands by his own arbitrary authority.<sup>11</sup> The king combined in himself from the first what may be called executive, judicial and military functions, the King's Justice in later times being definitely regarded as prevailing over all private jurisdictions.<sup>12</sup> An offshoot of the king's executive authority in later times was his guardianship of *dharma* and the Brāhmaṇas.<sup>13</sup> With all its importance, however, Vedic kingship was far from being consolidated into a centralised despotism. The Vedic State, to begin with, was not sufficiently organised to permit the king's office to be placed on a secure footing. The conception of an omnipotent Divine Law (*vrata* or *dhāman*) and all-powerful custom (*dharma* or *dharman*) in early times and that of sovereignty of the Sacred Law (*dharma*) at a later stage, ruled out the king's claim to legislation. Nor did later times lack in the formulation of such constitutional principles of high potential importance as that kingship was a trust.<sup>14</sup> Of the nature of the constitutional checks imposed upon kingship by the order of Brāhmaṇas, the class of nobles and of high officials as well as the Popular Assemblies, we shall have occasion to speak presently.

A fundamental feature of Vedic polity from early times is the complete separation of the ruling power (*ksatra*) from the spiritual one (*brahma*). The later texts not only distinguish sharply bet-

8 See above, pp. 33, 57-59.

10 See above, pp. 56, 57.

12 See above, pp. 12-14, 62-66.

14 See above, pp. 14-15, 36-37, 91-96.

9 See above, pp. 12, 34, 59-60.

11 See above, pp. 60-62.

13 See above, p. 64.

ween the attributes and functions of these powers, but also point out how the one is incompatible with, and even antagonistic to, the other. While *brahma* and *kṣatra* are regarded implicitly in the older times as the two dominant forces in the Society and the State, the later texts explicitly lay down the doctrine of their joint sovereignty over the *viś* (people). As regards their mutual relations, *brahma* is held in general (as might be expected from our priestly authorities) to be dominant over *kṣatra*. But this claim is sometimes tempered by the admission of their interdependence and equivalence, or even of superiority of *kṣatra* to *brahma*<sup>15</sup> In the above respects the relation between *kṣatra* and *brahma* in the Vedic State may well be compared with that between *imperium* and *sacerdotium* in the mediaeval European polity. Unlike the mediaeval European Church, however, the Brāhmaṇical order, because of its lack of organisation and its normal mental outlook, was unable to establish any system of collective control over the State.<sup>16</sup> In the office of the *purohita* the Brāhmaṇas, indeed, possessed a pillar of their strength. For he was regarded from the first as the necessary adjunct of the king and as the protector of the realm. Later times stressed the essential importance of the *purohita's* office not only for the religious needs of the king, but also for the security and welfare of his kingdom. But it appears that the *purohita* was sometimes in danger of losing the privileges of his position owing to the caprice or tyranny of his patron.<sup>17</sup> On the whole, it seems that the constitutional influence exercised by the Brāhmaṇa order in general, and by the *purohita* in particular, depended more upon personalities than upon continuous and established law or usage.

The beginnings of judicial, financial and military administration go back to the *Rgvedic* times.<sup>18</sup> Though the levy of a

15 See above, pp. 22-24, 36, 71-80.

16 See above, pp. 159-160.

17 See above, pp. 24-25, 151-157.

18 See above, pp. 18-21.

permanent tax (*bali*) at least in later times could not but contribute to the rise of a centralised government,<sup>19</sup> we have but imperfect knowledge of the machinery of this administration. It seems likely that like the Anglo-Saxon *Witenagemot* arising out of the old *Folkmoot*, the Vedic *sabhā* which was originally a Popular Assembly was afterwards transformed into the king's Court and Privy Council.<sup>20</sup> The *śacīva* and the *mantrin*, afterwards well-known as the titles of High Ministers, are mentioned in some texts, but they are mere names.<sup>21</sup> Of the officers in charge of various branches of the administration, we have no exact indication. We hear of the *madhyamaśi*, the *jīvagrbbh* and the *sthapati* in the older texts and of the *ugra* and the *pratyenas* in the later ones,<sup>22</sup> but the nature of their duties is unknown. Other offices like those of the *sūta* (court minstrel and herald), *ksattr* (distributor of food), and *saṃgrahitr* (charioteer) are evidently associated with the royal court and household. But we have only vague hints of their public functions. The *sūtas* with the *grāmanīs* were probably officers of the first grade, while the *ksattr*s and the *saṃgrahitr*s were officers of the second class. While the *sūta* probably represented the Vaiśyas in their relations with the king, the *grāmanī* who may have been at first a mere troop-leader became afterwards the civil and military head of the village administration. Though the tenure of the *grāmanī*'s office is not certainly known, it seems that in some cases at least he was the head of the clan settled in the village. The *senānī* in charge of the military administration is known from *Rgvedic* times, thus introducing us to a notable feature of Vedic polity, viz. the separation of the higher military administration from the civil.<sup>23</sup> However indefinite the machinery of Vedic administration may

19 See above, p. 38.

21 See above, p. 111.

23 See above, pp. 19-21, 39-41, 102-110.

20 See above, pp. 48-49, 119-123.

22 See above, pp. 18, 40-41, 109, 115-116.

appear to us at present, it occupied a conspicuous place at the royal court and at the great kingly sacrifices. The *sūtas* and the *grāmaṇīs* formed from early times a class of non-royal 'king-makers' ranking below the princes and nobles (the royal king-makers). This probably suggests that they had some control in the choice of kings. Again, the representative *sūta* and *grāmaṇī* as well as *ksattr* and *saṃgrahitr* were included in the list of *ratnins* at the *Rājasūya*, while their relations, male and female, figured among the guardians of the sacrificial horse and the attendants of the Queens respectively at the *Aśvamedha*.<sup>24</sup> We may observe, in conclusion, that while an early text recognises the test of a good administration to be the peace and prosperity of the humble subject, a much later passage takes it to consist in the immunity of the subjects from sins of every kind.<sup>25</sup> In other words, the end of the State is at first conceived as securing the mere life of the people, but afterwards with the growth of increased responsibilities of the king it is regarded as ensuring their good life.

The Vedic people possessed in early times two Popular Assemblies, viz. the *sabhā* and the *saṃiti*, of which, however, the constitution and functions are imperfectly known. Both these Assemblies apparently had the right of debate,—a privilege unknown to the Popular Assemblies of other ancient peoples. The *saṃiti* probably as the Popular Assembly *par excellence* was regarded as the king's most important asset. It may have exercised at least in some cases the privilege of electing the king. The other Assembly called the *sabhā* had probably from the first some judicial functions.<sup>26</sup> In later times the *saṃiti* disappears from our view, and when it reappears in the Older Upaniṣads, it is attended by the king and the Brāhmaṇas and it is probably entrusted with some public functions.

<sup>24</sup> See above, pp. 40, 101-102.

<sup>26</sup> See above, pp. 25-28, 45-48.

<sup>25</sup> See above, pp. 41-42, 116.

Meanwhile the *sabhā* seems to have been gradually transformed from a Popular Assembly into the King's Court and Privy Council by a process analogous to that which led to the rise of the *Witenagemot* in place of the Anglo-Saxon *Folkemoot*.<sup>27</sup> But there is reason to think that the *vox populi* to the end counted as a factor to be reckoned with in the working of the State administration.<sup>28</sup>

Vedic Society was divided from the first into four classes, afterwards called Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas (or Rājanyas), Vaiśyas and Śūdras. Even the theories of cosmic creation from the *Rgveda* onwards seem to be purposely framed to emphasise the striking differences of rank and status between these classes.<sup>29</sup> Other texts give us a somewhat clear idea of the peculiar religious as well as civil rights of these classes. The Śūdra as occupying the lowest rank in the social scale, is not only debarred from the sacrifice, but is practically excluded from participation in the sacrificial ceremonies. Again, he is at least in extreme cases a hereditary slave or serf without security of his holding and without the right of wergeld.<sup>30</sup> The Vaiśya is joined in fellowship with the Kṣatriya and the Brāhmaṇa in the ceremonies as well as formulae of the sacrificial ritual. But there is a notable tendency to restrict or even do away with his religious rights. Though evidently a freeman, he is emphatically subject to the king's authority. In particular, he is liable to taxes and other unnamed burdens and is without security of personal rights.<sup>31</sup> The texts do not give us adequate warrant for the supposition of any general movement tending to raise the status of the Śūdras and depress that of the Vaiśyas in later times.<sup>32</sup> As for the Kṣatriya, he is no doubt equally entitled with the Brāhmaṇa to the performance of the *Śrauta* sacrifices. But

27 See above, pp. 118-122.

29 See above, pp. 22-23.

31 See above, pp. 135-138.

28 See above, pp. 123-124.

30 See above, pp. 128-135.

32 See above, pp. 157-159.



there is a strong attempt in some quarters to confine the higher privileges of the sacrifice to the Brāhmaṇa alone and even to assert the Brāhmaṇa's monopoly of the sacrifice. On the other hand the Kṣatriya is admittedly the strongest element in the society, and as such holds the Vaiśya especially in political subjection.<sup>33</sup> Among the Kṣatriyas themselves there are gradations of rank. The Rājaputras ('princes') and Rājanyas ('knights') form the first and second order of nobles with corresponding differences of title and status.<sup>34</sup> The king's retainers, though supposed in early texts, to comprise the group of princes, skilled craftsmen and higher officials formed, as said before, a class of king-makers. But there is nothing to suggest that their distinction was anything but personal.<sup>35</sup> As for the Brāhmaṇa, he has by virtue of his original creation the Divine Right to social precedence. Again, his religious rights are undoubted, extending according to an extreme view to a monopoly of the sacrifice. On the other hand, his civil rights, though fortified at first with formidable doctrines of his quasi-divinity and his divine protection and afterwards with those of his own divinity and independence of the Kṣatriya, amount mostly to a claim to the immunity of his person and property. To these are joined a few public rights including the right of attending the *sabhā* and filling the office of the *purohita*. But even these privileges are subject to admitted limitations, not to speak of their frequent violations by tyrannical Rājanyas.<sup>36</sup> The *purohita* is indeed from the first a necessary adjunct of the king filling the function of 'protector of the realm.' But he sometimes at any rate suffered ill-treatment at the hands of ungrateful or inconsiderate kings.<sup>37</sup> Among the causes tending to produce this weakness of the Brahmanical order must

33 See above, pp. 138-140.

34 See above, pp. 140-144.

35 See above, pp. 140-144.

36 See above, pp. 144-150.

37 See above, pp. 151-156.



be mentioned its lack of organisation, its studied aloofness from the class of nobles and last but not the least, its normal mentality.<sup>38</sup>

We may pause here to analyse some of the factors that apparently shaped the growth of Hindu public life in its earliest phase as represented in the Vedic *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the Older Upaniṣads. Beginning with the racial factor, we may observe that the Indo-Aryans were settlers amid a large indigenous population. Afterwards this distinction was overlaid by another division (arising no doubt in part also from racial diversities) into four *Varnas*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Kṣatriyas* (or *Rājanyas*), the *Vaiśyas* and the *Sūdras*. Within these grand divisions there arose minor groups such as *rājaputras* and *rājanyas* within the order of *Kṣatriyas*, and the *takṣan* and the *rathakāra* inside the order of *Sūdras*. From these divisions, large and small, there resulted corresponding differences of civil and religious status. Coming to the influence of the economic factor, we may mention that it must have accounted together with other causes for the rise of the class-divisions just mentioned. Its influence was felt in other directions as well. Like the ancient Teutons, the Indo-Aryan tribes seem to have been averse to town life, and the culture they developed accordingly was essentially a rural one. We can trace the influence of this culture in the fact that the village became the unit of the Late Vedic State, while an undefined share of the agricultural produce and live-stock of the villagers formed the source of the king's revenue. To the influence of these factors was added that of geography. The Indo-Gangetic plain, much as it may have been covered in early times with marshes and forests, presented no natural obstacles to the aggregation of smaller political units into larger ones, while its remarkable system of waterways opened up easy lines of communication from one end of the country to the other. These circumstances could

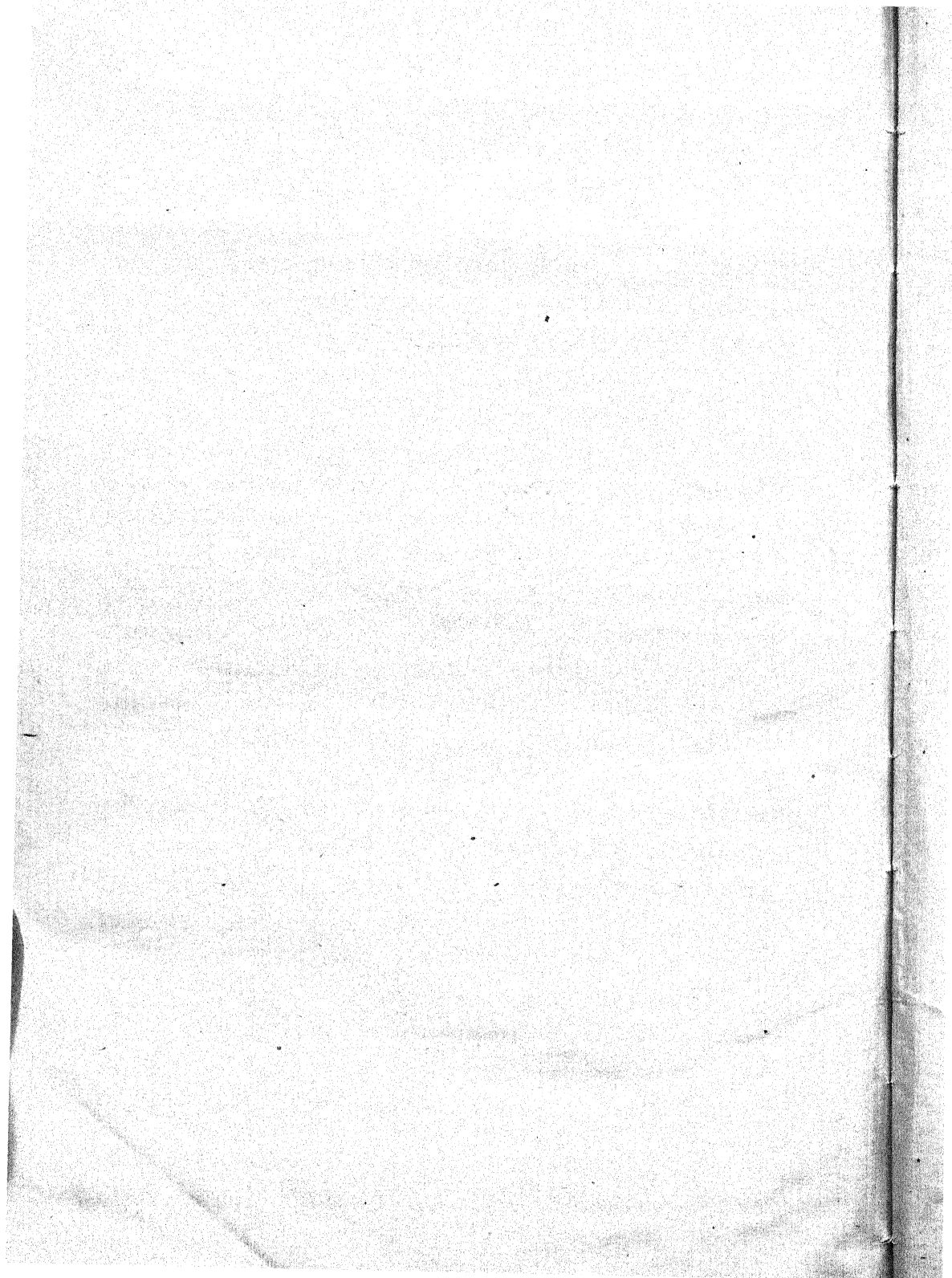
38 See above, 159-160.

not but lead in comparatively early times to the rise of large territorial kingdoms as well as overlordships implying in the hyperbolic language of a Brāhmaṇa text (*AB.* VIII. 5) a sovereign "all encompassing, possessed of all the earth, possessed of all life, from one end up to the further side of the earth bounded by the ocean, sole ruler."

From a general review of the characteristics of the Vedic Polity, it would appear that it was as yet lacking in the strength of organisation and of stable relations between the component parts. On the other hand, the Vedic King almost from the first was vested with sufficient authority to make his influence a real factor in the working of the State administration. To admit this, however, is not to agree with Oldenberg<sup>39</sup> that there was no public life in Vedic India, and that all common interests were concentrated and incarnated in the person of the prince, the virtual proprietor of the possessions of his subjects. For as we have seen, the Brāhmaṇas (and specially the *purohita*), the nobles, the officials and the people were centres of political power, although in ways unfortunately incapable of precise definition. The real significance of the Vedic Polity, it seems to us, lies in its marking the formative stage in the development of Hindu political institutions. To it we owe those ideas and institutions which were destined to shape the public life of the Hindu people down to much later times. Among such examples we may mention, in the first place, the territorial State and the overlordship of one State over other States. Such also was kingship regarded essentially as a magistracy with supreme executive, judicial and military functions including the guardianship of Dharma (Sacred Law). Such, again, was the idea of sovereignty of Dharma which derived its origin from a higher source than king-

<sup>39</sup> *Das Religion der Veda*, quoted with approval by Victor Henry, *La Magie dans l'Inde Antique*, p. 145.

ship. To the Vedic times also we have to trace the beginnings of an administration with executive, judicial and military branches and with the central government vested in the king and his council and the local government centred on the village headman. Another legacy of the Vedic State was the complete separation of the ruling from the priestly power. Finally, the Vedic period left to the succeeding ages its system of social divisions with unequal rights and privileges which remained a characteristic of Hindu polity down to its last days.



# INDEX

## A

- Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna, 8, 154  
 Adityas, 10-11, 85, 89  
 Agni, 9-12, 14, 19-21, 23-24, 31, 48,  
 52, 54, 58, 73, 76, 83, 124, 129,  
 151  
 Agnicayana ceremony, 71, 131  
 Agni Gr̥hapati, 54  
 Agnihotra ceremony, 130, 150  
 Agniṣṭoma sacrifice, 130  
 Amitratapana Śuśmīṇa Śaibya, 155  
 Aṅgas, 30  
 Aṅgīrasas, 89  
 Āpastamba, 134  
 Arminius, 17  
 Asuras, 8  
 Āśvamedha sacrifice, 58, 65, 68, 74-75,  
 78, 86, 90, 101-102, 117, 120, 135,  
 141-143, 148-150, 156, 160, 167  
 Āśvapati, 116  
 Āśvins, 10  
 Atyarāti Jānaptapi, 103, 155

## B

- Baden-Powell, B.H., 114  
 Bahlikas, 30  
 Bakre, M.G., 123  
*Bali*, 18-19, 38, 60, 137  
 Banerji, N.C., 26, 49  
 Bede, 29  
 Beowulf, 2  
 Bharadvāja, 23, 154  
 Bharata, 25  
 Bharatas, 50, 110  
 Bharata Dauḥṣanti, 86  
 Bhaṭṭa Bhāṣkara, 109-110  
 Bloomfield, M., 1, 26, 28, 33, 61-62, 92,  
 115, 124  
*Brhad-devatā*, 154, 156  
 Brhaspati, 9, 24, 27, 36, 57-58, 73,  
 132, 151  
 Brhaspatisava sacrifice, 151

## C

- Caitraratha clan, 143  
 Caland, W., 61-62, 66-67, 70, 77,  
 82-84, 89-90, 92, 98, 102, 107-113,  
 116, 124, 126, 134, 143, 145, 154, 156  
 Chadwick, H.M., 29, 82, 127, 141  
 Cherusci, 17  
 Citraratha, 143  
 Cumuri, 8

## D

- Dārila, 62  
 Dāśarājña battle, 13  
 Dasyus (Dāsas), 2, 13, 30  
 Devāpi, 24, 81-82  
 Dhuni, 8  
 Dionysius, 9  
 Divodāsa Atithigva, 8, 16, 153  
 Dumont, P.-E., 142, 157  
 Durmukha king, 86  
 Duṣṭaritu Paumsāyana, 80

## E

- Eggeling, J., 54, 66, 68, 79, 83, 87,  
 98, 101, 105, 107, 109-111, 120-122,  
 128, 141, 152  
 Eleusis, 24

## F

- Folkmoot, 167

## G

- Gandhāris, 30  
 Geldner, K.F., 5, 10-11, 17-18, 21-22,  
 25-26, 28, 46  
 Ghosh, Batakrishna, 156  
 Gosava sacrifice, 84  
 Griffith, R.T.H., 10, 22-23, 31, 33, 39,  
 42-43, 47

## H

- Harisvāmin, 65, 109  
 Haug, M., 7, 87, 150



Henry, V., 61, 92, 115-116, 170  
 Heracles, 9  
 Hillebrandt, A., 3  
 Hodgkin, 9  
 Hopkins, E. W., 58, 60, 112

## I

Ikṣvākus, 156  
 Iliad, 2  
 Ilibiśa, 8  
 Indra, 8-10, 14-15, 27, 31-34, 36, 39,  
 44, 57-59, 63-65, 69, 73, 76, 80-81,  
 83-85, 88-89

## J

Jana, 155  
 Janaka, king, 95  
 Janamejaya Pāriksita, 86  
 Jayarāma, 122  
 Jayaswal, K.P., 9, 26-27, 46, 55, 64,  
 81, 86, 94, 99, 110, 122-123  
 Joliffe, 3, 14  
 Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice, 70

## K

Karka, 149  
 Kāśis, 30, 50  
 Kaurama, king, 31  
 Keith, A.B., 4, 17, 24, 66, 77-78, 88-  
 89, 106, 109, 120-124, 139, 142,  
 152, 155, 157-158  
 Kekayas, 116  
 Kern, H., 7  
 Keśava, 61, 92, 124, 155  
 Kikaṭas, 8  
 Kosalas, 50  
 Kraivya, king, 86  
 Kṛvis, 50  
 Kṣatra, 66  
 Kurus, 24, 31, 50-51  
 Kuru-Pañcālas, 51, 86  
 Kuruśravaṇa Trāsadyu, 24  
 Kutsa, 156

## L

Lanman, C., 31-34, 39-40, 47  
 Ludwig, A., 7, 19, 21, 26-28

## M

Magadhas, 30  
 Mahābhīṣeka ceremony, 65, 88  
 Mahāvṛṣas, 30  
 Mahidhara, 109, 122  
 Majumdar, R.C., 86  
 Manu, 32, 34  
 Manyu, 19  
 Marka, 151  
 Maruts, 5, 10, 22, 69, 89, 105, 144  
 Marutta Āvikṣita, 122  
 Max Müller, F., 116  
 McCrindle, J. W., 9  
 Megasthenes, 9  
 Mitra, 9, 11-13, 21, 23, 63, 77-78, 132  
 Monier-Williams, M., 150  
 Muir, J., 7, 150  
 Mūjavants, 30

## N

Nahuṣa, king, 19  
 Neisser, W., 21  
 Nirukta, 81-82  
 Nityanand, Swami, 31

## O

Oertel, H., 156  
 Oldenberg, H., 3, 24-25, 28, 50, 101,  
 122-23, 170

## P

Pañcālas, 50  
 Pāriksit, 31, 33-34, 42  
 Pārtha oblations, 73  
 Pijavana, 16  
 Pipru, 8  
 Pischel, R., 5, 21  
 Prajāpati, 8-9, 41, 47, 51-52, 58-59,  
 81, 84, 89, 128, 137, 139, 148  
 Pramaganda, prince, 8  
 Prasad, Beni, 157  
 Prastoka, 154  
 Pratardana, 154  
 Prthu, 55  
 Prthvi, 45  
 Punarabhīṣeka ceremony, 65, 76, 88  
 Pūru, 25  
 Purus, 16, 50  
 Purukutsa, 8



Puruṣamedha sacrifice, 53, 106-107,  
121, 147

## R

Rājasūya sacrifice, 51, 53-57, 59, 63,  
70, 73-74, 84, 87, 96, 98-99, 101,  
104, 108-111, 117, 123, 125-126,  
129, 131-132, 146, 149, 153, 167

Rājya, 66

Rākā, 4

Rāṣṭra, 66

Ratnahavīṃśi ceremony, 134, 149

Robita, 33, 42

Roth, R., 13, 18, 21, 28

Rudra, 55, 103-104, 106, 111, 119, 132,  
134

Ruśamas, 30-31

## S

Sabhā, 4, 45

Sāhadevya Somaka, 8

Samiti, 16, 45

Samtanu, 24, 81-82

Samyu Bārhaspatya, 147

Ṣaṇḍa, 151

Sarvamedha sacrifice, 147

Satvants, 110

Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice, 54, 108, 129

Savitṛ, 14, 55

Sāyaṇa, 109-110, 156

Soma, 10, 12, 20, 23-24, 31, 36-37,  
44-45, 63, 66, 81, 132, 146, 152

Soma sacrifice, 70, 76

Soṇa Sātrāsāha, 86

Srñjaya, 154

Srñjayas, 51

Srñjaya Daivarāta, 8

Sthapatisava sacrifice, 108

Sudās, king, 8, 13, 16, 24-25

Sulka, 38

Sunaḥśepa, 78, 127, 129

Suśravas, 156

Svetaketu, 118

## T

Tacitus, 16

Tāṇḍya, 138

Trasadasyu, 8, 12, 33

Trtsus, 16

Tryaruṇa Traivṛṣṇa, 155

Turvaśas, 50

Tūrvayāṇa, 8

## U

Upagu, 156

Uru, 156

Uśīnaras, 50, 86

Uttara Kurus, 85-87, 153

Uttara Madras, 85-87

## V

Vadhryaśva, 16

Vairadeya, 4

Vaiśyasava sacrifice, 108

Vaitahavyas (Sṛñjayas), 30

Vājapeya sacrifice, 57-58, 74, 83-84,  
123, 136, 151-152

Vāśāśikhas, 154

Varcin, 8

Varuṇa, 8-9, 11-14, 18, 21, 23, 31, 37,  
55, 59, 63, 77-78, 81, 83-84, 89,  
103, 132

Vaśas, 50, 85

Vasiṣṭha, 23-24, 154

Vāsiṣṭha Sātyahavya, 155

Vasordhārā ceremony, 129

Vasus, 89

Vāyu, 27

Veṅkaṭamādhava, 156

Videhas, 50

Viś, 67

Vishweshwaranand, Swami, 31

Viśvāmitra, 23-25

Vrājapati, 5

Vṛṣa, 155

## W

Weber, A., 20, 150, 153

Whitney, W.D., 5, 18, 31-34, 39-40,  
42-43, 47-48

Witenagemot, 49, 165, 167

## Y

Yadus, 50

Yadu Turvaśa, 9

Yājñavalkya, 95

Yama, 10, 31, 34, 38, 48

Yāska, 81-82

## Z

Zimmer, H., 4-7, 9-10, 14, 17-18,  
20-21, 26-28, 80-81, 122

## ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS

Page	Line	For	Read
5	23	waten	waren
8	20	non-Aryan	non-Aryans
20	29	wichtge	wichtige
22	29	prāsmā	prāsma
25	29	lelevant	relevant
26	27	her	der
27	27	daivi	daivī
61 }	27 }	Altindische	Altindisches
62 }	28 }		
65	6	Kāru	Kuru
71	23	Viṣ	Viś

82 Add at the end of l. 19:—

Beni Prasad, *The State in Ancient India*, p. 61, quotes PGS. I. 68 as saying that 'Royalty does not depend on hereditary right but on acquisition by the sword.' But no trace of this doctrine can be found in the passage above quoted.

102	9	Kṣattr	Kṣattr
114	26	Baden-powell	Baden-Powell